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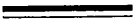


ST HUGH *of* LINCOLN



ST HUGH *of* LINCOLN

A BIOGRAPHY

BY
JOSEPH CLAYTON
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TO
THE VERY REV.
DOM VINCENT SCULLY
CANON REGULAR OF THE LATERAN
IN FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM

“Some law there needs be other than the law
of our own wills ; happy is he who finds a
law wherein his spirit is left free.”

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PREFACE

CERTAIN names in that great dictionary of international biography we call the lives of the saints—not till time itself shall end will the series end and the volumes be closed—at once excite the mind and kindle the affections. Luminous these names ; an inspiration and a very ‘trumpet of attack.’

An inspiration because an assurance that the craggy way, steep and narrow, of the saints is no private lane but a public thoroughfare, the King’s highway that all may travel ; the open road where great companions, valiant of soul and of uttermost charity, go marching along.

A trumpet of attack—challenging the fashions of the world and reversing its verdicts.

Not that all the names can stir our hearts or move the will to action. At best but faint memories can be summoned of saints, long venerated in the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage but now but dimly recalled. In some cases time has obliterated all that was ever known to man, blotted out all that was ever set down, of these holy ones ; beloved and honoured in their day and generation there is now no one to honour them.

In the crowded list of Celtic saints myth and legend obscure personal identity in many a case. When history can write no epitaph poetry and

fancy weave garlands for the forgotten shrine ; incidents of doubtful actuality take the place of evidence. Of a number of Cornish saints, for instance, we know nothing whatever ; memory has preserved no tradition. Once upon a time, for the beauty and goodness of their lives, they were acclaimed as saints by their neighbours ; but no official register was kept, no ecclesiastical kalendar marked their names, and these Cornish saints with all they wrought, have passed into oblivion. Only the names remain. Remembered no more by man do the saints in their turn forget ? It is incredible. Still their prayers ascend for the succour and protection of wayfaring folk, beset by the changes and chances of this mortal life. For the charity of the saints does not fail. *Caritas numquam excidit.*

So, too, of that unnumbered host, countless and uncounted, whose names, written in the Book of Life, are unrecorded by human piety, and are not inscribed by authority on the roll of the canonized immortals. Do we doubt that the prayers of these, the holy and humble of heart, avail us in the hour of temptation ? Who can measure the help given to the living by the blessed dead ?

They are, they must be, the majority, the uncanonized saints. But many in number are the saints venerated locally, in whose high honour and dear remembrance, village and township, parish and diocese, keep yearly festival. Beyond the diocesan boundaries, or at widest the national frontiers, these saints are for the most part unknown. As the host of holy men and women of consecrated life, monks, nuns and friars, raised to the altars of the Church

are for the most part unknown outside their own order and congregation.

Few, after all, by comparison with the uncanonized multitude, the saints of local cultus and the beatified of the religious orders, are the saints of universal distinction ; whose names belong to the history of man, of whom mankind never tires. They are few, these great names, but they hold the interest of mankind ; and this interest increases and spreads.

The interest is often the greater when conversion makes its dramatic appeal. Conversion from the engagements of the world to the things of God marks the life of more than one of the saints whose names illuminate the centuries. In youth they are seen by no means conspicuous for sanctity. They achieve holiness, and the achievement is a miracle of grace.

St Augustine, St Francis of Assisi, St Ignatius Loyola, St Teresa of Avila—to name but four of the greatest—are plainly of the company of the converted. Of none of them in early life could the vocation have been foretold. The call of God invaded them and they took the high, adventurous way of the soul—not without considerable mental disturbance—following the gleam, caring for nothing on earth but the knowledge of God that is eternal life, intent only on doing His will. Small wonder the interest attached to their lives is universal and is constantly renewed.

But take another four of the greatest—St Anselm, St Dominic, St Catherine of Siena, St Francis of Sales. No fevered crisis, no abrupt passage from the

friendship of the world to the companionship of the kingdom of God, no sudden revelation of the true purpose of human existence, no slow and painful journey in quest of truth is told in these biographies. They do not stumble on the road to Damascus, blinded by the unexpected vision of God, hearing from heaven the utterance of divine wisdom. Theirs is the path of sanctity from the beginning. Strong characters and tender, theirs is the faith transcendent, and the enduring love, unflecked by self-esteem, uncorroded by that worser thing—self-pity. In humility of heart they wrought powerfully, and diffused in many temporal activities the fragrance of holiness. A place in history is no less secure for these than for the saints of changed life and converted purpose.

Hugo the Burgundian, our St Hugh of Lincoln, stands with St Anselm. Pre-eminently the born saint, and no less pre-eminently the witness to the liveliness, the vigour, and the humour that are properly associated with sanctity. From boyhood the path of holiness was clearly before him, and St Hugh taking it travelled the road till death with cheerfulness, radiating hope and courage.

It has been said that ‘the only safe views in spirituality are cheerful views.’* St Mary Magdalen of Pazzi attacked the tendency to sadness in her companions by saying, ‘Give back peace to your soul, my sister, and live in joy, because the Lord pours not His grace into sad hearts.’ St Hugh willingly giving up all personal property retained his sense of humour to the last.

* The late Joseph Rickaby, S.J.

The life of St Hugh of Lincoln was written with great faithfulness and much detail by his chaplain, Adam, the monk of Eynsham Abbey, who lived in intimacy with St Hugh for the last three years of the bishop's life. It was to Adam St Hugh related, as old men will, the story of his boyhood, youth and life at the Grande Chartreuse. With a memory always exceptionally vivid the bishop recalled the very conversations of years long past and Adam stored carefully in his mind these cherished reminiscences. Later came opportunities of increasing the store of information ; in especial from the monks of Witham charterhouse, who urged Adam to write this biography ; and from others well acquainted with the Carthusian bishop of Lincoln in earlier years. It was during the interdict in the reign of King John, say about A.D. 1212, that Adam's *Magna Vita S. Hugonis* was written, stamped with truth on every page. In 1864 the text was edited and published in the Rolls Series.

The *Magna Vita* has never been translated into English in full. A French life of St Hugh, edited, revised and translated into English, was published in 1898. Otherwise we are dependent on two biographies written by Church of England clergymen.

In the twelfth century St Hugh was irresistible. Kings yielded to him—Henry of Anjou, Richard Cœur de Lion, the graceless John. Gerald the Welshman, archdeacon of Oxford—whom we better know under the Latin style, Giraldus Cambrensis—a sharper critic than royalty of the episcopate, and with rarely a good word for monks

or for his fellow clergy in general, acknowledged handsomely the goodness and the charm of the bishop of Lincoln, praising St Hugh not only for his learning but finding him 'a pleasant companion, full of talk and fun ; bright and cheerful of heart as if his mind were free from cares, easily roused even upon a small occasion ; brusque, full of enthusiasm and a strict disciplinarian.'

Thus appeared our St Hugh of Lincoln to Archdeacon Giraldus of the bitter pen ; so he struck a contemporary.

Oxford historians of the nineteenth century, Stubbs, Freeman, York Powell, also knew Hugh of Lincoln for a saint and appraised his services to England.

John Ruskin extolled St Hugh and the Carthusian order that trained him in holiness, declaring in a familiar passage that the sons of St Bruno, 'in their strength from the foundation of the order at the close of the eleventh century to the beginning of the fourteenth, reared in their mountain fastnesses and sent out to minister to the world, a succession of men of immense mental grasp and severely authoritative innocence : among whom our own Hugo of Lincoln, in his relations with Henry II and Cœur de Lion, is to my mind the most beautiful sacerdotal figure known to me in history.'*

Deep calls to deep, heart speaks to heart. The radiance of St Hugh is undimmed by the centuries, the splendour of his character undiminished. Undoubting, without misgivings or hesitations, he pursued the paths of peace ; never turning aside,

* *Praeterita*, Vol. 3, Chapter 1.

totally undismayed when enemies, Apollyon-like, bestraddled the road; nor refusing battle in realms spiritual and temporal on the side of justice. For twenty years in England—fifteen as bishop—St Hugh displayed the vigour and simplicity of the servant of God. Thirty years he spent in the willing practice of holiness—for the training began in boyhood—before the testing time arrived.

Kings and ecclesiastics, peasants and courtiers knew him for a saint when he talked with them, and when he rode our English lanes and ministered at our altars. For his life was of one piece, in its love of justice and of all living things, human and non-human, and of the dead, and of outcast folk and lepers. They knew him for a saint, this bishop of Lincoln, when he healed the sick as did the infants who chuckled and gurgled for joy when he took them in his arms. The goodness and greatness of St. Hugh—his strong and abiding love for his kind and for the birds of the air, his readiness to speak with kings in the cause of right, to tend the dying and bury the dead, and, perhaps above all, his capacity to keep the soul unspotted from the cares of office and the inner citadel inviolate—these things are of no fleeting interest but are of permanent value in the history of the race.

St Hugh of Lincoln left no volumes of sermons, no contributions to theology. But he began the building in the English gothic of the minster of Our Lady on the hill of Lincoln. His life is the glory that remains. No man knows where the dust that was once his body rests.

So here once more is a biography of St Hugh of

Lincoln, taken from the *Magna Vita*, and from the odds and ends of information that Adam did not use and may be found in the works of Giraldus, Ralph of Coggeshall and William of Newburgh. But all is from the *Magna Vita* unless it is otherwise stated.

J. C.

ST. MERRYIN,
CORNWALL.
May, 1931.

AUTHORITIES

Magna Vita S. Hugonis, edited by J. F. Dimock (Rolls Series, 1864).

The standard work by St Hugh's chaplain, and most carefully edited.

Vita Sti. Hugonis, by Giraldus Cambrensis, edited by J. F. Dimock (Rolls Series, 1877).

Giraldus was for six years at Lincoln during St Hugh's episcopate.

Vita Metrica S. Hugonis, edited by J. F. Dimock (Rolls Series, 1861).

A thirteenth-century work that adds little to our knowledge but enlarges poetically many well-known incidents.

The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln, translated from the French Carthusian life and edited by Herbert Thurston, S.J. (London, 1898).

The chronology for St Hugh's life is settled decisively by Father Thurston's work. The book also contains a vast amount of information on liturgical and ecclesiastical topics, and is in fact of very great value to all students of the period as a work of reference.

The Carthusian Order in England, by E. Margaret Thompson (London, 1930).

This important book, the fruit of long and

patient research, illuminates the history of Witham priory and St Hugh's life in Somerset.

St Hugh of Lincoln is studied from an Anglican point of view in biographies by Canon Perry (1879) and by Dr. Woolley (1929).

A TABLE OF DATES

- 1084 St Bruno with six companions settle at La Grande Chartreuse
- 1110 Guigo I Prior of La Grande Chartreuse
- 1140 ST HUGH born at Avalon in Burgundy
- 1142 Abelard dies at Cluny
- 1146 St Bernard preaches second crusade
- 1149-50 ST HUGH enters priory of canons regular at Villarbenoid
- 1152-90 Frederick Barbarossa emperor
- 1154-9 Adrian IV—the English Pope
- 1154 Henry of Anjou King of England
- 1155 ST HUGH takes vows of canons regular
- 1159 „ „ ordained deacon
- 1163 „ „ Prior of St Maximin
- 1163 „ „ enters La Grande Chartreuse
- 1170 Murder of St Thomas of Canterbury
- 1173 Canonization of St Thomas
- 1173 ST HUGH Procurator at La Grande Chartreuse
- 1174 Henry II does penance at Canterbury
- 1175 Peace of Windsor—between England and Ireland

- 1177 Frederick Barbarossa reconciled with Pope Alexander III
- 1180 ST HUGH becomes Prior of Witham in Somerset
- 1180 Philip Augustus King of France
- 1184 Henry II's Woodstock Assize
- 1186 ST HUGH Bishop of Lincoln
- 1187 Jerusalem taken by Saladin : third crusade
- 1189 Death of Henry II : accession of Richard I
- 1192 ST HUGH begins building Lincoln Cathedral
- 1198 Pope Innocent III
- 1199 Death of Richard I : accession of John
- 1200 Death of ST HUGH
- 1205 Death of Archbishop Hubert
- 1207 Stephen Langton consecrated Archbishop
- 1208-13 England placed under interdict
- 1220 Canonization of ST HUGH
- 1226-70 St Louis King of France
- 1280 Translation of the relics of ST HUGH
-
- 1539 Dissolution of English Charterhouses
- 1540 Destruction of shrine of ST HUGH at Lincoln
- 1540 Martyrdom of English Carthusians
-
- 1876 Return of Carthusians to Parkminster, Sussex

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1883 | Consecration of church of St Hugh at Carthusian priory, Parkminster |
| 1906 | Expulsion of Carthusian Order from La Grande Chartreuse by French Government |

I

HUGH OF AVALON

THE LIFE of St Hugh of Lincoln illuminates the latter half of the twelfth century—‘that wonderful twelfth century, the mother of the fruitful middle ages.’¹ The century of the first crusades, of contest of pope and emperor for supremacy in the world of Europe, a century that saw the rise of university and growth of city, the revival and reform of monastery. A century that had its fierce discussions concerning the truth of things spiritual and intellectual, and witnessed to the everlasting curiosity and activity of the mind of man.

Three crusades in that century could not save Jerusalem from the Saracen. The onrush of the armies of Islam might be checked (and in Spain and Portugal successfully resisted), Mohammedan rule would torment and challenge Christendom for eight hundred years and more after St Hugh was dead.

But the intellectual strife of St Bernard and Abelard was over, and Abelard had died in peace at Cluny Abbey befriended by Peter the Venerable in 1142 while Hugh was yet an infant. Peter the Lombard, who wrote the standard theological textbook of the age, the famous *Book of Sentences*,

developed the philosophical method of Abelard, with discussion pro and con of everything under the sun, and was alive when Hugh reached manhood.

Students crowded into Oxford towards the close of the century. The clerks of Oxenford in fact became so numerous that the city could hardly feed them—according to Richard of Devizes in 1192. The University of Paris was already a hive of theologians and philosophers, and our Henry II had, in 1167, called upon all clerks studying in France to return home.

The beginning of a civic pride and the feeling after municipal unity is discerned. Towns received charters—not without paying for them—and citizens and burghers are associated as a commune. London, above all, is extolled by contemporary writers for its pride and riches, as Paris is for its learning.

‘Wonderful twelfth century, mother of the fruitful middle ages, holding in her the secrets of the triumphs of the age that followed.’ A century of monastic revival and reform, with St Malachy, in Ireland, and St Bernard, for twenty years the counsellor of popes, exhorting all Christendom from Clairvaux ; with Cistercians building abbeys and redeeming waste places in Yorkshire and elsewhere ; the sons of St Bruno emerging from their hermitage in the mountains of Grande Chartreuse to establish charterhouses of prayer in many lands and to speak before kings of the eternal justice of God ; and canons regular radiating from their house of St Victor near Paris, making a new foundation at Prémontré under St Norbert, and St Gilbert of Sempringham founding in England a double order

of nuns and canons. It meant above all, this renewed life of religion, the call to a life of prayer. In the storm and stress of that twelfth century, with its abundance of rageful anger and heroic patience, of hope and fear and faith, charity was not lacking. Charity compelled men and women to betake themselves to prayer, to become monks and nuns. For the love of God constrains to prayer. And with prayer went obedience and poverty and chastity—challenging the world, flesh and devil in the dominion of the soul; setting obedience against pride, poverty against the world's lust of riches, chastity against the overweening demands of the flesh.

(So it was that king Henry's great justiciar, Richard Lucy, resigned his office in 1179 to become a monk at Lesnes, the monastery he had founded in honour of St Thomas of Canterbury, by whom he had himself been excommunicated some thirteen years before.)

Twelfth-century monasticism in England has its record in many contemporary chronicles. Abbot Sampson, conspicuous in Jocelin de Brakelond's chronicle of Bury St Edmunds, survives, and is a familiar figure.²

As to questions of church and state, of relations of civil and religious authority and limits of spiritual and temporal supremacy, these crop up vigorously in that twelfth century and call for decisive answer; and will again and again recur in the centuries that follow. The controversy sharply waged between pope and emperor on the position of bishops—were they servants of the crown, vassals of the prince from whom they received their lands and

temporal estates, or ministers of the church, under obedience to the pope the fount of authority, whence came their consecration to the sacred office?—had been fairly adjusted by the Concordat of Worms in 1122; bishops must do homage to the king for their lands, and to that extent were his vassals; in spirituals they were free, in no way deriving spiritual authority from the crown.

But the settlement of the controversy concerning this investiture of bishops brought no conclusion to the sharp dispute between pope and emperor, the tremendous issue of supremacy. To that issue pope Adrian IV (the one English pope) and emperor Frederick Barbarossa addressed themselves, each claiming feudal rights over the other. (It was no mere academic contest, for the sovereignty of Italy and the political independence of the papacy were at stake.) Pope Adrian, his successor Alexander III—against whom recalcitrant cardinals set up an anti-pope—and Frederick Barbarossa were all dead before the century closed, leaving the dispute a much encumbered inheritance for imperialists and papalists to divide.

England was not unaffected by these acutely waged disputes. St Anselm vindicated peacefully the spiritual character of the episcopate against the regal claims of Henry I. St Thomas sealed with his blood a testimony against the encroachments of civil authority on the responsibilities of the hierarchy. The martyrdom of St Thomas in his own cathedral by 'king's knights' stopped the plans of Henry II for enlarging the king's justice at the expense of the milder law of the ecclesiastical courts, for the

martyrdom was an outrage too gross and shocking to be ignored. The king's knights destroyed the king's policy when they murdered the archbishop.

Henry turned to Ireland and the Irish question was opened. Henry, with the blessing of pope Adrian, designed to bring that country under the rule of the king of England with Normans as lieutenants of the crown. The Normans stayed, to become more Irish than the Irish ; Fitzgeralds, Butlers, MacMahons, de Courcies, de Burghs ; an English pale was marked. But the enterprise brought lasting strife, and the peace of Windsor that Henry made in 1175 (and the name of the great archbishop of Dublin, St Lawrence O'Toole, is identified with that pact) was never kept. The Irish question was opened.

Into this twelfth century, with its multitude of political problems and burning questions of church and state, came St Hugh of Lincoln. To none of these problems did he propose a solution, to none of these questions did he suggest an answer ; being indeed far otherwise occupied in mind.

St Hugh was born in Burgundy in the year 1140 ; in the castle of Avalon by the river Isère, near Pontcharra on the borders of Dauphiné and Savoy ; about sixty miles south-east of Lyons. (The ruins of the castle of Avalon stand in the commune of Saint-Maximin.) William, Hugh's father, lord of the many acres of Avalon, was noble in mind, brave in arms—the flower of chivalry, *flos militiæ* ; he was also profoundly religious. Anna, Hugh's mother, was 'the glory of the ladies of her time'—*matronale decus*. So it is recorded. Both parents were

of strict conscience, faithful in the performance of duties ; of one heart and mind in the desire to do the will of God and to fulfil his justice.

Hugh was the youngest born of three brothers. On William, the eldest, and on Peter, fell the responsibility of managing the family property as the old man their father betook himself more and more to prayer. (Peter seems to have come to England when Hugh was bishop of Lincoln and to have been given lands at Histon in Cambridgeshire.)³ The tie between the brothers was strong.

It was no doubt the dream and hope of Anna—such dreams and hopes belong to mothers in every age—that her youngest son should become a priest ; and very early came signs that the child was drawn to the high calling of religion. A grave child, learning from his mother the service due to the poor—that mother who herself washed the feet of lepers—taught that the service of the poor was the service of God, fond of listening to the pious talk of his parents and of asking questions about the church and religion, caring nothing for the toys and playthings of childhood, in an atmosphere of disciplined affection, of peace and order, was the soul of the infant Hugh fashioned. Not for William and Anna were the ways of the world, its prizes and rewards, and not for their sons ; in especial not for Hugh. For Hugh, it was perceived, had no inclination for a child's common games ; a desire for study, an aptitude for knowledge were noticed. Hugh at the age of seven was an eager scholar, as clever as he was good.

Anna did not live to see the ample harvest of her

pains, the mother's hopes made real, the dreams come true. To others it was left to guide her youngest born through the difficult years of boyhood, to tend and watch the growth of youth till the full stature of manhood was achieved. Anna, lady of Avalon, went to her rest. Hugh would see her no more in this world. She had done what she could to prepare her child for his vocation, in God's hand was the future.

II

CANON REGULAR

HUGH was a small boy when his mother died. He was but ten years old when his father carried him off to the neighbouring priory of the canons regular at Villarbenoit. The knight of Avalon had finished with the world and done with camps and military exercises. His dear lady was dead, and the longing that had often possessed him to devote himself to religion, to surrender his soul more completely to God, might now be satisfied. Little Hugh could at the same time enter the priory as a pupil of the canons.

The lands of Avalon were divided between William, the eldest son, and Peter when Hugh became a schoolboy at the priory of Villarbenoit.

This priory, which the knight of Avalon endowed with the portion of his youngest son, was a community of not more than six or seven members ; a dependency of the larger house at Grenoble—for the cathedral chapter at Grenoble, drawn to a common rule by the bishop St Hugh, friend of St Bruno, protector of the Carthusians, and atronp saint of Hugh of Avalon, had been constituted a body of canons regular by his successor, also named Hugh, a Carthusian. St Hugh of Grenoble died in

1132 ; and loved and venerated during his long episcopate was at once accounted a saint on his death. As a matter of fact he was canonized two years after his death. The influence of this great bishop on all that part of France can hardly be exaggerated.

To the priory school of the canons regular at Villarbenoit came the sons of the nobility and gentry who lived in the surrounding country. Hugh had for his tutor an elderly canon, a clerk learned in human knowledge and in the law of the church ; a warm-hearted man, of profound piety, who could win and hold the affection of the child entrusted to his care. A tutor of very wise and discerning mind—he was afterwards chosen prior—who at the outset directed the energies of his small charge to the life and study of religion. The son of the pious knight of Avalon and the holy woman Anna, had qualities that, rightly fostered, would flower and bear fruit in the order of canons regular.

A lively interest in religion is an exciting and a familiar experience of boyhood. It is apt to be quenched where school games are rigorously pursued and the demands of examination boards successfully gratified ; commonly it is lost when obedience to standards based on custom is strictly enforced. By prudent guardianship was Hugh of Avalon delivered from the snares that beset all children who enjoy daringly spiritual adventures in school days. The canon who initiated Hugh into the pleasures of the scholar's life encouraged as heartily the boy's religious enthusiasm as his alert intelligence. Persuasively—yet without softness, for the scourge was

freely used in that monastic school*—he held the will of his pupil to the things of God. The boy's natural sincerity was not twisted and distorted, his fearlessness was not repressed. In that twelfth-century school of the canons regular Hugh was to know first the will of God and to obey it. To break the laws of God was the fearful thing ; exemption from observing schoolboy law might be allowed.

Hugh in babyhood had cared nothing for toys, so at school he never wanted to play games ; and there was no one to drive him to the playing fields. The inducements were all in the opposite direction. For his tutor, always with an eye on Hugh as a future priest and ornament of the order of canons regular, urged him to studies when his companions were at their sports. In later life St Hugh recalled how from the first his tutor had been untiring 'in his efforts to inspire me with a love for the study of the sacred scriptures and of theology' ; how when his schoolfellows ran off to their amusements he would do his best to counteract the interest in 'games and other trivialities' by introducing

* More than sixty years before Hugh entered the priory school of the canons regular Eadmer records that St Anselm, then abbot of Bec in Normandy, spoke out against this beating of school-children. 'We are always beating them but they only get worse,' a neighbouring abbot had mournfully complained, 'and though we constrain them in every way we can it's all of no use.' '*Constrain them !*' Anselm replied. 'When you plant a tree in your garden do you so tie it up that it cannot stretch forth its branches ? And if you did so what sort of tree would it become a few years hence when you released it ? But this is just what you do with your boys. You cramp them with terrors and threats and blows, so that it is impossible for them to grow or enjoy any freedom. Kept down in this way their temper is spoilt by evil thoughts of hatred and suspicion against you and they put down all you do to ill-nature and dislike.'

variety into the course of study, saying at the same time : ‘ My dear, dear boy, you don’t want to join in the silly games of your comrades ; it is right enough for them, so leave them to it. What are pleasures to them are not the pleasures that belong to your vocation. Little Hugh, little Hugh, it is in Christ I am bringing you up. Schoolboy fooling is not for you.’

The lively, good-tempered boy, Hugh of Avalon, quick at lessons, mentally retentive, ready-witted, was therefore not diverted from a religious vocation by the excitements of sport and the playing fields. The good life of prayer and study was the ideal and the environment favoured it. That his father should renounce the world to enter religion counted for much in the very impressionable years of boyhood. ‘ My father gave up all he had in the world to enrol himself in the ranks of the army of Christ ; he was not afraid to become a recruit in the camp of God, though he was a veteran among the soldiers of the world. Well might he have rested from his labours and enjoyed honour and glory like other knights, but he had no wish for rest in this world. He wanted to labour for his Lord and Master as long as he had strength to do it and to take his rest in heaven. And that was why my father took the religious habit—for a long time he had been animated by the religious spirit—and decided that I should have the same happiness. No persuasion was required to get me to renounce the pleasures of the world, for I knew nothing about them, and to follow my father as a fellow soldier in the armies of God.’

It is St Hugh’s own account. Not so happily do

parental plans succeed in every case. In fact they often go astray. With Hugh there was no chafing in the apprenticeship, no later resentment at uncongenial occupation. Father and son were in complete agreement. As the father on entering the priory was clothed in the habit of a canon regular so also was the little boy ; it was the custom of the time.

A rare and beautiful affection bound these two together. When the infirmities of old age fell upon the knight of Avalon it was Hugh who nursed him. The care of his father was the charge laid upon Hugh by the prior and without neglect of studies or church services was this labour of love performed.

So the years passed until early manhood came to the boy canon. At fifteen Hugh took the vows of religion.

The vocation to the religious life was never doubted in the case of Hugh of Avalon. A singularly happy and untarnished boyhood quickened the desire to become a priest. The training at the priory school made other desires worthless. This motherless boy must needs love and he had all a boy's deep admiring love for elders who can command the heart, all the loyalty that age can summon from youth.

With the boyish enthusiasm for religion and the boyish zeal for the round of church services, Mass and the recitation of the divine office, grew conspicuously the love of letters.

When books are scarce, more is required of memory ; and Hugh, when he was a bishop, would mention how early he had given his mind

to the words of the church's office. He could never bear patiently with the mistakes, the mispronunciations, false quantities, slips and lapses that all too frequently occur in the public worship of God when the clergy are illiterate or mentally astray. Hugh would point out to delinquents that these bad things need not be. That as he from boyhood had been diligent to master the recitation of the services of the church so others could do the same and overcome a failing that dishonoured God.

In truth Hugh as a boy greatly relished the services in the priory church and was never in the least bored by the saying or singing of the divine office. And this boyish delight in church services had its depths in a love of God that shrivelled and finally extinguished all love of self. The consciousness of God's close presence, the overpowering conviction that he belonged to God, brought distaste for all that alienated the soul from the spiritual life. What could the world offer that would weigh with this ardent boy against the happiness tasted and experienced in the household of faith? What study was so sweet as the study of the sacred Scriptures? What learning could compare with the knowledge of the things of God, with theology, queen of all sciences? Secular learning, acquaintance with the classical Latin authors, belonged to the course of study; but not predominantly. The essential of this twelfth-century education of monastery schools was the knowledge and experience of the Christian religion.

Hugh, gifted with faith, burning with love, was singularly fortunate in his tutors. The canons

regular combined the work of the monk—the common round of praise in the service of the church—with that of parish priests. Their priories were schools of theology, anticipating the seminary, training colleges for clergy who would preach and administer the sacraments. From the first the canons regular were priests and theologians. The triple vow bound them individually; poverty required the surrender of personal property to the community, perpetual chastity forbade incontinency, obedience to superiors enjoined the discipline of humility. The canons regular claim St Augustine for their founder.

The soul of this schoolboy, Hugh of Avalon, was in the keeping of the canons regular of the priory of Villarbenoit throughout the decisive years of adolescence. If the potential qualities of saint and scholar were recognized in the boy and fostered by his tutor, the fine sense of humour that so generally accompanies sanctity also matured and ripened in the congenial atmosphere of the house of the canons regular.

So the swift years passed.

The good old knight of Avalon died and was buried, before Hugh in his nineteenth year was ordained deacon.

It was not at his own request that he was ordained so young. With all his longing for holy orders Hugh shrank from promotion. The desire to be a priest was tempered by the sense of utter unworthiness. But prior and community were unanimous that Hugh must now be ordained; and being under obedience, protesting in vain his tender years, he

was ordained deacon by Geoffrey, bishop of Grenoble, a Carthusian.

Hugh being made deacon, the next thing to be done was to push this son of the priory into a public ministry. The youthful cleric had gifts of utterance, the qualities of a preacher. To the prior Hugh manifestly possessed talents that must forthwith be used to the glory of God. With Hugh's exalted enthusiasm and deep spirituality went solid learning. He was set to preach to the people.

Self-love that refuses responsibility and rejects the opportunity presented was no more found in Hugh than the self-love that hastens to fill the centre of the stage. (An exaggerated sense of personal importance is probably at the root of the disease, whether we name this inflated egoism shyness or conceit or ambition.) Hugh had his heart fixed on the things of eternity, his affections leapt ardently to God. Disliking the distraction of prominence, he would not, if he could help it, be dragged into public notice. But the will of Hugh of Avalon was trained in ready and cheerful obedience, and having urged his own unworthiness he did what he was required to do, and did it well. It never seems to have occurred to him that in the performance of the task allotted to him there was particular ground for self-satisfaction or for self-reproach. To do what one had to do under obedience to the best of one's ability was all that signified. The spirit of obedience being there the results were with God.

The canons of Villarbenoit noted the wisdom of Hugh the deacon as they noted his selflessness and devotion. They loved him and were proud of him.

His voice was so beautiful that people who heard Hugh sing the Gospel at High Mass said it was the voice of an angel.

When he was twenty-four Hugh was sent by the prior to take charge of the village of St Maximin, near Pontcharra, where the canons had a cell. This place had been neglected and the preferment meant banishment from the community to the desolation of a scattered country parish. Hugh pleaded for a companion, an older man, a priest. What would become of him, isolated, solitary, a mere deacon, utterly without experience of parochial life, unless he had a priest to help him? The prior agreed that it was not good to be alone. Hugh was marked out for great things; his future must not be hampered at the outset of his work. St Maximin was but the first step, a venture, an experiment. With an old man of devout life and conversation, a priest and fellow canon of Villarbenoit, Hugh departed to his parish.

He stayed there less than a year. But in that short time he brought prosperity to St Maximin; for the lands and vineyards, church property, and largely left uncultivated, were let by Hugh to a keener peasantry and became fruitful ground. The people from all the countryside flocked to his preaching; they accepted his reproofs, rejoiced in his eloquence, responded to his appeals; sinners were brought to repentance and amendment by his words. Yet for all that Hugh could not stay at St Maximin.

An episode in the ministry of this parish priest, who was yet no priest, reveals the quality of the man now burdened with responsibility. With

resolute will went strength of love, and the simple fearlessness of the humble of heart. There was a man at St Maximin who, the neighbours said, was living in adultery. Hugh was told of the scandal—in a country parish gossip and rumour are alert at a tale of moral delinquency, an intrigue is not long concealed—and Hugh was shocked at the story; the thing seemed to him incredible. One of his flock living in mortal sin! Incredible, monstrous, horrible! (So young he was, this deacon of the canons regular.) The accusation persisted. Hugh was driven to make enquiries, to investigate for himself, to get at the bottom of the foul business. To his unspeakable distress it turned out to be true. The man accused was living an evil double life. Then Hugh sought the man privately and told him what ought to be done to end the scandal. But so far from admitting guilt the man blustered, angrily denying the charge. In an outburst of rage he nearly came to threatening Hugh. When Hugh was once more alone he felt great sadness, for the man seemed incorrigible—a lost soul.

But the matter could not be left at that. Hugh meditated on the words of the Gospel.* His next step was to confront the offender with two or three witnesses who knew all about the affair. In their presence Hugh once more urged amendment, promising forgiveness if the sinner would depart from sin and do penance. Again the man roughly resented the charge. He could no longer plead innocence, but he refused to change his life; he would do nothing to stop the scandal.

* St Matthew xviii, 15-18.

Hugh, following the instruction of the Gospel, then took a graver measure. It was now known to everybody in St Maximin that a Christian man dared openly defy the moral law of God. There came a holy-day when Hugh denounced in church before the whole congregation the guilt of this man, declared the enormity of his sin, and in the terrible words of St Paul warned the offender that he was doomed to be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh if he did not swiftly repent. The guilty man was present and, hearing the awful fate predicted, completely broke down. In fear and trembling he rushed out into the middle of the church and crying and groaning in great distress confessed bitterly his sin. Then after due penance had been done he was pardoned and reconciled.

The incident illustrates St Hugh's method ; plain straightforward dealing in the spirit of love. The method never failed when it came to dealing with kings and their officers.

The short ministry at St Maximin was no wasted time ; in no sense was it a series of disappointments. But Hugh could not stay.

The adulterous man who repented and was pardoned brought Hugh into a world where lust and passion make havoc of souls. All the purity of youth revolted at the shock of the first contact with the reality of sex. Women bothered Hugh at St Maximin. They were for ever coming to him for advice and he did not understand them. One woman in particular, it seemed to Hugh, would never leave him alone. He grew uneasy at the challenge of the flesh, at an intrusion troublesome

to the spiritual life. Not for him certainly was the calling of a parish priest. Others of his brethren were meant for this daily combat, were capable of managing souls, were born to rule. Hugh had but a single aspiration—to devote himself solely to God. To stay at St Maximin was to miss the mark. It was no place for a man who from boyhood sought the contemplative life.

The prior—and the canon who had been Hugh's first schoolmaster was now prior—loving the youth, heard gladly the appeal for recall. Hugh returned to Villarbenoit. What would it profit to gain the whole world and lose one's soul? The preacher, young, popular and successful, had tasted in that remote village of St Maximin the applause of the world and disrelished it. He had exercised authority and desired to obey rather than command. Back in the priory the discipline of the daily round of duties, or prayer and praise, was resumed and the world forgotten. St Maximin was but an interruption. The priory of the canons regular was home for Hugh, home where the hidden life could be lived untrammelled. Yet not for long would it be his home.

III.

THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

‘THE mountains stand round about and the Lord is in the midst of his people for ever.’ *Montes in circuitu, et Dominus in circuitu populi sui; ex hoc nunc usque in sæculum.*

At first sight Hugh was in love with the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse in its high solitude of the Dauphiny Alps. It was here he would dwell, swiftly his mind was made up. St Hugh of Grenoble, his patron saint, found this wilderness and led St Bruno and his companions to it when they sought a hermitage. And because the group of mountains that surround the valley where St Bruno built his monastery are named the *Massif de la Grande Chartreuse* so the monastery itself was called ‘Charterhouse’ and the monks of St Bruno’s rule ‘Carthusians.’⁴ (Cistercians and Premonstratensians similarly retain the title of their first establishment at Citeaux and Prémontré.)

The prior of Villarbenoit on the day he paid a visit to the Grande Chartreuse, taking Hugh with him for company, brought sorrow on himself. For Hugh seeing the place was filled with rapture and an immediate resolve. Amazing and wonderful was this great monastery in the very heart of the

mountains ; amazing and wonderful this place, no other than the house of God and gate of heaven.

Terribilis est locus iste : hic domus Dei est et porta celi. Here the world was certainly excluded, here the soul was free to pursue its true end. Not the scenery alone, the tremendous grandeur of the mountains that stood so close above the valley ; not the buildings only—wooden save the church, which was of stone—and the stark simplicity ; not the glorious library of the fathers—drew Hugh of Avalon to the Grande Chartreuse. It was the spirit of the place, the *genius loci*, that thrilled him and held him captive.

On that first visit Hugh, young as he was, recognized the powerful charm of the Carthusian life. Asceticism, the daily mortification of the flesh, was the training of these monks ; serene in heart, free in spirit, and of cheerful countenance and unblameable conversation. The solitude that is the essence of the Carthusian rule is tempered by the fact that the life is communal. It is a self-supporting community of hermits independent of the outside world. No one but shares the common worship. If social life is reduced to a minimum, which is what the true solitary desires, the common life of prayer and praise is ample.

The Carthusian has his own cell—a four-roomed house—and yet is not isolated from the brethren. The vow of obedience to the spiritual head safeguards the solitary of the charterhouse from vagaries and eccentricities that are apt to overtake all who live alone.

The call was irresistible.

To the prior, dom Basil, of the Grande Chartreuse, eminent in the annals of his order and always to be honoured, for 'he it was who received into the order St Hugh of Lincoln'—Hugh told his desire and prayed to become a novice.

The reply was not encouraging. Youthful enthusiasm—an excellent thing in itself—is no evidence of religious vocation. Besides, it is written in the Carthusian constitutions that the severity of the Carthusian life must be set out plainly to all who seek admission. And then he was so young, this canon from the priory of Villarbenoit, and he looked delicate. 'My son,' said dom Basil stiffly, 'how can you think of such a thing? The men who live here, who make their home in these hard rocks, are harder than the rocks. They are pitiless to themselves and without pity for those who dwell with them. The place itself is dreadful, our rule terribly severe. The hair shirt would wear all the skin off your bones, the discipline is so stern it would kill a tender plant like you.'

Hugh refused to take this rebuff as final. So far from being disconcerted by the alarming picture he was all the keener to join. Youth is not to be gainsaid from adventure by warnings of hardship; the prospect of hardship to many is an incitement to pursue the chase.

During that visit Hugh confided his hopes of becoming a Carthusian to others than the prior, and these so far from shaking their head at the presumption highly approved. They did more, they promised to back him up, urged him to stick to his

purpose, did all they could to welcome him to the charterhouse.

The old prior of Villarbenoit saw, too late, the spell that had fallen on Hugh. In haste he insisted on departure, and in haste set off with his young companion. But the longing for the life at the Grande Chartreuse was in the eyes of Hugh and the old man broke down at the thought of separation. Through his tears he lamented the fatal visit to the Carthusians; the terrible blow meant personal suffering and untold loss to the priory. 'Dearest of my sons, the Carthusian life has ravished you, it possesses you. What is the use of your returning with me when your heart is somewhere else? Sooner or later your body will follow, I know it. And now in my old age when I am so in need of comfort all my comfort will be gone. Suddenly the dear light of my eyes will be put out, the staff of my old age snatched from me.' All the way back the old man poured out his grief at the thought of Hugh leaving the canons regular for the Grande Chartreuse. From the hour Hugh entered the priory a small boy had he not been his special care? Had he not trained the child in religion, nurtured him in holiness? and now they were to lose him for ever.

'Stay with me, my son, for the few short years that remain; stay with me, and close my eyes when I die.'

The force of the appeal bore heavily upon Hugh. It brought him to tears and the old prior pressed the advantage. His dear son must reassure him; must take a vow never to join the Carthusians while his old teacher lived. Without this vow was

taken the old man would know neither rest nor peace.

Here was a horrible dilemma. That God had called him to the Carthusian life Hugh was convinced ; at the same time how could he resist the prayer of the dear old man who had been to him not only a foster-father but his superior, to whom he had promised obedience ? His soul was torn and perplexed. His feelings counselled surrender. In the emotional stress it seemed right not to refuse the prior's heart-breaking appeal. Hugh took the vow. While the prior lived he would not leave him.

And then having taken this oath to stay with the canons Hugh realized that it was a mistake. An oath that ought not to have been taken. He had acted in good faith ; for the moment it had seemed that it was God's will he should stay at the priory. But it was clear he must not stay. The disciple of Christ must turn from home and break the ties of home and family to follow his Lord. The words of the Gospel are plain :

' Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum et matrem et uxorem et filios et fratres et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus.

' If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and his brethren and sisters he cannot be my disciple.' Not all are called to this following of Christ ; but Hugh was certain he was called.

Once convinced that this oath taken under stress need not be kept, an oath which God did not desire to be kept, Hugh put his affairs at the priory in order and then without saying a word went

quietly off to the Grande Chartreuse. He was welcomed joyfully and with the greatest kindness.

Years afterwards when Hugh was asked by an intimate friend if he felt he had done right in breaking his oath in this way, he answered that he had never been troubled with the slightest scruple ; it had brought the greatest joy, and never could he recall it without being conscious of the blessings God had given him.

Yet was there always a dear remembrance of his life with the canons regular.

It was abandoned, this life, because to Hugh came the call to depart ; renouncing all earthly ties he set out to follow more closely the way of his Master in the solitude of the mountains of the Grande Chartreuse.

IV

THE CARTHUSIAN LIFE

FULL sixteen years did St Hugh live at the Grande Chartreuse ; the first ten in the uninterrupted solitude his soul desired.

The fire of love that drew him to this house of God in the midst of great mountains burnt steadily. In the Carthusian life was the complete fulfilment of the hopes of boyhood, the ideals of youth. He never wearied of the long hours in church, never succumbed to the distressing sense of boredom at the liturgical routine that so frequently besets all who strive for mastery in the religious life. The daily chant of the divine office came to Hugh the Carthusian as something fresh and splendid every time he entered the choir. Tedium could not encroach on such a spirit. For the true contemplative is alert and buoyant of soul, not sinking lightly into the debility that demands distraction.

The worldling may devise means for 'killing time' ; the saint and the philosopher know that each one of us is under sentence of death, time bringing us nearer day by day to the hour of execution. In truth the hours are all too short for the full Carthusian day. Prayer is the chief business. Common prayer in the church, private prayer in

the quiet of the hermit's cell. Summer and winter, spring and autumn, throughout the year the Carthusian leaves his cell in the dead of night for the church, that matins and lauds may be recited, and it will be two hours later before he returns. At daybreak again the monks gather in church for prime ; then after Mass and till the midday dinner, which follows the recitation of the day hours—terce and sext—comes opportunity for necessary manual work. In the summer a siesta is taken after dinner ; in the afternoon, and if daylight allows, more manual work can be done. Vespers being sung in church, the day's common prayer is ended, for each monk will say compline in the retirement of his own cell. Darkness falls and it is time for bed, with sheep-skins for blankets, and sleep.

Changes in detail may be noted, but the Carthusian rule abides. The Carthusian monk of the twentieth century lives in the main much the same life as St Hugh lived in the twelfth.

For manual work there was wood to be chopped for cooking and for warming the cell. The Carthusian monk then drew his own rations and did his own cooking. To-day the dinners are cooked and brought to the cells by lay brothers. On festivals the community dines together in the refectory.

Copying manuscripts, and binding the precious parchments into books when the manuscript was duly copied, were absorbing occupations for the hours snatched from praise and prayer at the Grande Chartreuse. The greatly venerated prior Guigo I laid it down in the 'customs' which he

drew up about 1128 that 'books were most carefully to be guarded'; since these books 'provide perpetual food for our soul. It is not given to Carthusians to preach the word of God orally and therefore they can do it by the work of their hands; for as many books as we write so many preachers of the truth are made.' Two books from the monastery library were allowed to each monk of the Grande Chartreuse for private reading.

What finer life could Hugh, a man of prayer and of study, desire than this steady progress through the years? At the Grande Chartreuse with its regular customs, that varied only as the seasons vary, was the happiness defined by the philosopher—the full spiritual activity over a complete period of time.

And the purpose of it all, the end of all religious exercises and of the whole spiritual life, is simply 'obedience to the commandments of God and the accomplishment of the divine will.'

When religious orders are banished from the land prayer languishes. It is hard for a nation to retain the habit of prayer when there are neither monks nor nuns to pray continuously and keep the sacred fire of devotion burning.

With prayer went the training in obedience, poverty and chastity. The Grande Chartreuse trained men to be of strong character, of resolute will. The practice of obedience developed the talent to rule and command the obedience of others. In Hugh the daily exercise in humility produced a courage so robust and fearless that no room was left for subservience to the princes of this world.

Being really humble in heart, Hugh was to astound the princes of this world and their servants by his total indifference to the might of sovereignty that set multitudes trembling. Above all else was this Carthusian life the practice of the presence of God and daily submission to the rule of charity. Heart and intellect, soul and spirit, all were trained to the service of love.

At the same time there is no escape for the recluse from the temptations that beset the children of men. The solitary is peculiarly liable to the torment of suggestions grossly sensual. A riot of foul imagination, with delights of the flesh beyond common experience, assails the mind. A rabble of disordered thought jostles the soul, clamouring for admission to the citadel. The devil has his own methods for projecting evil, and unabashed by failure, aims to reduce the solitary to the mortifying humiliation of confessing partial surrender.

In the case of Hugh the Carthusian the devil had no success at all. The torture of an imagination that day and night prompted the flesh to revolt, inviting a rush of wild rebellious feelings, threatening destruction to the health of the soul, had to be endured. Hugh did endure it; but held out stubbornly against any consent of the will to the pictures presented in the mind; refused flatly any recognition of the suggestions that surged so furiously within. They were not his, these vile intrusions of the devil; they did not belong to him, these loathsome pictures of the obscene. He would never receive them or own them. Hugh unflinching held to his course, answering temptation with prayer

more urgent for deliverance, with penance more severe.

Suddenly the torment would stop, and calm and peace resume within the soul. A marvellous sense of comfort, that makes us forget the agony in our relief, attends the abrupt departure of acute physical pain, and Hugh relating the torture of temptation in those early years at the Grande Chartreuse described how God had pity on him :

‘ While I felt myself to be but dust and ashes, humbling myself beneath his feet and deploring the loathsome thoughts that attacked me, suddenly God took pity on his poor servant and poured out on me the light of his consolation. Then did God let me taste the hidden manna, so full of wondrous sweetness that the delights of the world became bitter. Alas ! how rare and fleeting were the happy moments of consolation. Fresh temptations arrived, renewed struggles, cries for help. Yet never, in spite of all my unworthiness, did God in his mercy forsake me. In the midst of blackest darkness I heard God speaking to me in the very depths of my soul. It was God’s hand that held me up and guided me through it all.’

At the very beginning and again at the end of his life at the Grande Chartreuse did the temptations of the flesh assail St Hugh through the imagination. He must have been a man of forty—it was just before the summons to England—when the devil renewed the attack after a long withdrawal from the field. It is often practised with success, this particular manœuvre, the rush and onslaught of a temptation believed to have been overcome for ever.

The devil's plan of campaign is, of course, well known : To take advantage of a soul released from a temptation once potent but now inoperative and unexpectedly let loose on it the very temptation more violently than before. Again the mind of Hugh was tortured by the vilest suggestions of carnal desire ; the foulest pictures of the pleasures of sensuality were presented to his imagination, the grossest depravity was shown to have delights.

St Hugh in his cell at the Grande Chartreuse at an age when not unreasonably he believed himself immune from the pricking of the flesh, was thus horribly plagued by the devil's imagery. Resistance to the corrupt fancies, abominable invitations, unutterably base impulses was never relaxed ; but the siege was prolonged, the assault fiercely waged, so that while the will was strengthened the general health of the body suffered. The armour was dented, not pierced.

Deliverance came when Hugh was asleep, in a vision of the old prior dom Basil but recently dead. Hugh cried out for help and dom Basil promised help. Presently Hugh awoke to find the temptation gone ; nor did it ever come back to him again.

Swiftly the years sped. Study, prayer, the choral office, and the daily tasks ; to these were added the special charge of a monk grown old and infirm in the Carthusian life, and Hugh, in whom reverence for age was as strong as the reverence for young children, repeated the service that he had given to his father at the priory of the canons regular. When the time came for Hugh to be ordained priest he shocked the old man by announcing there

was nothing he more desired than to become a priest. It seemed a terrible presumption to this venerable father that one should admit readiness to so holy an office. 'He who does not shrink from the priesthood is not worthy to receive it,' said the old man. However, on Hugh in deep humility confessing his complete unworthiness the old monk relented.

This was no rash youth who so carefully tended him ; here was a man filled with the spirit of God and marked for high destinies in the church. Prophetically the old man announced : ' My son, but I no longer call you my son but my lord. You will soon be made a priest and there will come a time when God wills that you will be a bishop.'

The care of St Peter the Cistercian, archbishop of Tarentaise, now an old man of seventy—he died in 1174 and was canonized in 1191—was also laid upon Hugh when that holy man came to stay at the Grande Chartreuse, and a strong friendship resulted. Hugh's affection for this courageous archbishop—St Peter of Tarentaise had withstood and rebuked the emperor Frederick Barbarossa for setting up an anti-pope—was returned. There was nothing wanting in Hugh's service. When it was a question of verifying a quotation or finding a book in the library Hugh was always at hand to fetch the book or give the author of the quotation. His reading and his retentive memory gave him the mastery of the Old and New Testaments, the lives of the saints, the writings of the fathers. In this companionship countless also were the opportunities offered for ministering to the bodily comfort of the old archbishop, and these were not neglected.

Elderly people when they respond to the affection of youth can give much in return. St Peter would take walks at the Grande Chartreuse, leaning on the arm of Hugh, and tell his young companion of the works of the Lord and speak of the wisdom that comes from God.

Hugh drank it all in—the message of ripe experience, an old man's tale of the goodness of God, of charity and courage. If Hugh gave service he had rich reward.

V

PROCURATOR AT THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

THE lay brothers at a Carthusian monastery have their own house, their own church, and their own rule. From the foundation of the order the lay brothers by their work made the Carthusian life possible. They were the husbandmen, shepherds and craftsmen. In the twelfth century many a lay brother had the vocation to religion without any call to the priesthood. Book-learning was not required of a lay brother, since he could learn by heart much of the divine office. The lay brothers—*conversi*—were directly under the procurator of the monastery, and in 1173 Hugh was appointed procurator at the Grande Chartreuse in succession to dom Guigo II, elected prior on the resignation of dom Basil.

This for Hugh was the end of the life of contemplation, of detachment from the world, the life of prayer and study he had set his heart upon. The fruit of the ten years granted to him was ripe for gathering. What the Carthusian training could do for a man would be seen ; for the light, no longer to be hidden, would penetrate the councils of kings and shine far beyond the mountains of Grande Chartreuse.

The procurator had more than the care of lay

brothers to distract him from the practice of the presence of God. The business of the monastery was in his hands ; the employment of servants on the monastery lands ; the reception of visitors—the procurator was guest master and would himself take guests to their appointed quarters. Only bishops and monks were permitted to stay within the monastery. Other visitors to the Grande Chartreuse claimed the procurator's time—the poor, who in every land and in every age knock at the door of convent and priory, of presbytery and monastery, seeking alms ; and because they are rarely sent empty away continue to knock.

But what is to be done, what can be said, when there is nothing in the house wherewith to relieve the needy ? It is difficult when no money can be given to say the right word to the mendicant who wants money ; but the strong-hearted in their simplicity and good-will can accomplish it. Hugh the procurator did it when the demands upon the resources of the house were more than he could satisfy. The charity that overflowed when relief was given was not withheld because the poor-box was empty. They were his friends, the poor, and friends understand. They did understand, the poor who came to the monastery door. And they loved him, Hugh the procurator, for the gracious speech and courteous treatment ; for the right word spoken when refusal is often harder to utter than to hear.

Other friendships were made by the procurator. Birds and squirrels came to his cell and shared his midday dinner, eating out of his hand. They would recognize his voice as they recognized his

presence as something whence no hurt could come.⁵ St Hugh was not the first, neither would he be the last of the saints, canonized and uncanonized, of Catholic christendom in whom the love of all the creatures of God was seen and reciprocated. This sense of kinship with birds and beasts was never for St Hugh, any more than it was later for St Francis of Assisi, a substitute for human sympathy, for it sprang from the love of God, the love for God's creatures. It was no hobby taken up for the beguilement of an otherwise loveless life ; neither was it an interest that would absorb the will to the neglect of love for God and human kind. Theologians, it is said, allow a soul to all sentient beings, though not an immortal soul to creatures less than man. Hugh's love of all living creatures was the love that overflows from the pure in heart who see God.

But the prior thought these birds and squirrels coming to be fed in the procurator's cell must be a distraction—as indeed they well might be to many people—and Hugh under obedience sent them away without a word. Yet he was sorry to lose them. Greater intrusions on the procurator's inner life were not so lightly to be dismissed.

The lay brothers were massive characters, as hard as the rocks that surrounded the Grande Chartreuse. Many of them came of noble family, and being of great fervour for religion, and without any taste for letters, misliking all book-learning indeed as an intolerable burden but willingly taught to recite by heart the greater part of the choral office, found their vocation as *conversi* in the lower house of the Grande Chartreuse,

Obedience does not come readily or easily to men like these twelfth-century lay brothers ; but they rallied to Hugh, the new procurator. They said of him that he brought peace to their souls.

Rare characters these lay brothers. Of iron will and gentleness of heart they walked with God and were without fear of man.

Brother Ainard, for instance, who helped in his zeal and enthusiasm the foundation of several Carthusian houses and lived to an immense age. Once when this intrepid lay brother had been sent to Spain, to assist at the founding of *Scala Dei* in the diocese of Tarragona, he was so greatly drawn in friendship to two holy hermits whom he found in the neighbourhood that when the Saracens overran that country and carried off the hermits with many other prisoners, Ainard persisted in getting permission to go to Africa in search of them. And having discovered them, not only did brother Ainard so deeply impress the man to whom the hermits had been sold in slavery that he released them without a ransom, but brother Ainard must also preach to the followers of the prophet and exhort them to become Catholics. No one withstood this marvellous white-haired old man ; they listened to him, these Mohammedans, in all respect while he denounced their wickedness and oppressions, subdued by his powerful voice, his flashing eyes, his terrible emphasis. Brother Ainard could be gentle and loving at other times, and these enemies of the cross were left in wonder and admiration at their strange visitor.

But when he was called upon by the prior to go

to Denmark to help with the founding of a monastery at Lunden brother Ainard, who was then nearly a hundred years old, implored to be excused. This was in 1174, shortly after Hugh became procurator. Brother Ainard could not face the prospect of going to the country of the Danes ; he believed them to be a barbarous people—though nobody knows why. The prior explained that it was necessary for Ainard to go, but failed to remove the deep prejudice. Ainard, protesting humbly his sorrow for disobedience, could not, would not, go to Denmark. Therefore, since discipline must be maintained, Ainard was expelled from the Grande Chartreuse and in the depths of the winter cast out. Not until the indomitable old lay brother had gone from charterhouse to charterhouse asking for pardon for his disobedience and begging for letters from the various priors recommending his forgiveness, was he readmitted to the Grande Chartreuse. But he was not allowed to remain, for the prior sent him to England to the new foundation at Witham in Somerset and there Hugh found him when he followed to become prior.

Brother Gerard, too, a man of good family, fearless, with whom it was all or nothing in religion, was also under the procurator's authority ; and brother Gerard went to England when Witham was started, and was one of Hugh's stoutest supports. It was said of brother Gerard when he died, which was soon after Hugh left Witham, that though without the learning of the book, he was a master of Catholic truth, and could have been not more perfect in theology had he studied in the

schools of Paris. 'I would that my wisdom and my philosophy were the philosophy of brother Gerard,' wrote the learned Peter of Blois, archdeacon of Bath, 'for his heart was empty of all save Jesus Christ.'⁶

Guests and visitors, lay brothers and the temporal cares of the community were for ever pressing on Hugh's own peace. Yet he had a wonderful way of throwing off his anxieties and summoning recollection of mind when he went into choir for the divine office.

'Remain with that,' Hugh would say of his cares when he took off his cloak on entering the church; 'and when the service is finished I will pick you up again with my cloak.'

That Hugh should remain procurator of the Grande Chartreuse was not to be granted. So many visitors, distinguished in the world and undistinguished, came to know him as the years passed. The whole countryside talked of him and his fame spread. In due time Henry of Anjou, king of the English and lord of Aquitaine by his marriage with Eleanor, was told of the procurator of the Grande Chartreuse, and acting on what he heard decided, impetuously as he was wont, that he must have him. For Henry, with his own genius for government, sought capable men for office in church and state and—when he could find them—men of religion.

Henry, for all his fatal quarrel with archbishop Thomas, for all the passions and paroxysms of rage that overtook him, never swerved from the faith of Christendom, nor faltered in his loyalty to the pope. He stood by pope Alexander III when his interest

might have been better served by supporting the anti-pope of the imperial party. For the greater glory of God and the well-being of the realm of England did Henry endow houses of religion. But at the house for monks of the Carthusian order, which Henry had founded at Witham in Somerset, things had all gone wrong. To save the situation, from what Henry could make out, Hugh the procurator of the Grande Chartreuse was the man that was needed.

VI

THE FIRST ENGLISH CHARTERHOUSE

KING HENRY of Anjou, the restless, impatient, passionate man, impulsive alike in love and wrath, and, like most strong men, trusting to the full where he trusted, holding fast by the friendships and ties of affection where he loved, had made his peace with God and man for the murder of archbishop Thomas, done penance at the martyr's tomb, and vowed to take the cross and journey to the Holy Land. As this vow could never be fulfilled, chiefly because of the folly and rebellion of his sons, Henry promised to endow houses of religion in his realm, and in return was freely dispensed from joining the crusade.

In 1178 the king made over the royal estate of Witham*—more than five thousand acres, and some five miles south of Frome in Somerset—to the Carthusians and appealed to the prior of the Grande Chartreuse to send monks. Prior Guigo II responded by sending dom Norbert and certain lay brothers. Two of these lay brothers, Ainard and

* The village is called Witham Friary to-day because the parish church is the old Carthusian church of the lay brothers—*fratres*.

Gerard, were to remain at Witham, but Norbert, the first prior, found the position impossible, and praying that he might return to the Grande Chartreuse was recalled and eventually became prior elsewhere.

Norbert's successor endured for a little while the miseries of Witham and then died and was buried.

Indeed the miseries that attended the first years of the Carthusians in England were enough to kill any man, religious or secular.

The king had given this estate, with its pastures and forests free of all rents and taxes, with commands that neither foresters nor their servants must in any way hinder or interfere with the monks ; and that was all that he had done.

Then came Norbert and his *conversi* into this strange land, where no man welcomed them, no one wanted them. They were foreigners, these queer monks whose like had never been seen in England before. Who could understand a word they said ? Why did the king grant them this place ? and what was to become of the inhabitants ? To the Somersetshire peasants, full of suspicion—for the countryman is naturally suspicious of strangers and distrustful of novelty and change—it was a disturbance of the established order, this arrival of foreign monks and their settlement in Selwood Forest. Their coming threatened the tenants and serfs of the king who already occupied Witham.

No preparation had been made for Norbert and his companions, no house awaited them, no compensation had been promised to the present occupants of the site of the monastery. The monks of

the charterhouse were not missionaries ; they were hermits and contemplatives, vowed to prayer. And here at Witham they were set down in a wilderness, with no house to shelter them, and for neighbours a jealous and unfriendly set of people with whom it was hard to exchange words that could be understood. Norbert, holy and humble of heart, made no headway in these appalling conditions of life. It was not for him a life of religion, this pioneering in the wilderness. A few plain wooden huts they built in a clearing of the forest, these hard-pressed monks, and a rough palisade of logs marked the enclosure. And then prior Norbert was allowed to return home and prior Hamon his successor died and the lay brothers were left unshepherded. To king Henry, the founder, it seemed as if his plans for a charterhouse in England were to come to nothing ; a very disagreeable notion to the royal founder.

Altogether that first settlement of the sons of St Bruno in the royal forest of Selwood was an unhappy beginning ; a bad start.

Then as it happened king Henry, being in France, where his possessions stretched from the English Channel nearly to the Rhone, complained to the count of Maurienne how ill it had gone with the foundation at Witham. All the efforts of the king to establish the Carthusian order in England were, it seemed, to be frustrated. What could be done ? Was there no man to come to the rescue from all the sons of St Bruno ?

The count of Maurienne knowing the Grande Chartreuse at once told the king of its procurator.

Hugh of Avalon was the man to be prior of Witham if the Charterhouse would let him go : ' For he will never leave unless he is bound under obedience to go.' The count spoke fervently in praise of Hugh and the king listened. This monk was not only of noble family, he was full of patience and sweetness ; a great soul and most courteous to all. ' He is loved by everyone who knows him and he is the one man who would make an end of your anxieties and make his order flourish in your kingdom. No one will ever complain of him as a neighbour, no one will avoid him as a foreigner ; everybody will find him a fellow countryman, a brother, a true and close friend. For he carries all mankind in his heart and loves his fellows with a love beyond words.'

Henry was impressed. He must have this monk, Hugh of Avalon, this procurator of the Grande Chartreuse ; there was no time to be lost. So immediately an embassy was sent, an embassy of important persons, with Reginald (called the Lombard), bishop of Bath, at its head, to wait on the prior and the monks of the Grande Chartreuse with the king's request for their procurator to be sent to Witham. The Carthusian bishop of Grenoble, Jean de Sassenage, was persuaded to join the deputation.

The prior, dom Guigo, was utterly dismayed when he read the king's letter and heard the words of the king's ambassadors. He could only call a full chapter of the monks and put the matter before them. And there in full chapter the monks spoke their mind. The prior was against Hugh leaving,

but the monks were divided in opinion. Some were for Hugh staying where he was ; so good a man ought not to be lost to the Grande Chartreuse. Others saw in the king's request the finger of God. A certain Carthusian, dom Bovo, who himself later became prior of Witham, spoke eloquently on the side of the latter. Could they not see the working of divine providence in this, and how the sanctity of the order would shine forth over the world in their very dear brother Hugh ? Besides, did they suppose it would be possible to keep him here much longer, a light hidden under a bushel ? ' Believe me,' dom Bovo concluded, ' we shall hear very soon of this light being placed on a candlestick for the illumination of the whole church. For it has seemed to me for a long time that the gifts of dom Hugh are more those belonging to a bishop than a monk.'

At last the prior asked Hugh to speak.

' Why it's quite out of the question,' said the procurator. ' I leave my own will in the matter out of account, for I have learned to renounce it. But I can't govern my own soul in spite of all the years I have lived in this holy house and the many good examples to help me. What good therefore would it be to send me to a strange land to govern the souls of others when I have not been able to keep our rule at home as it should be kept ? If I may say so without any disrespect, I don't think this is a matter for discussion at all ; it can't be seriously thought of for a minute, and therefore let us say no more about it. What we must do is to choose a man from our order who will be able to meet the

needs of the king and then send him to England with the ambassadors. We must tell them that we are giving them a far better gift than what they asked for ; that instead of the man that was mentioned under a mistake we are sending them the one the king would really have chosen had he known of him. In that way the ambassadors will be thoroughly satisfied and will be glad at the exchange.'

The very humility of Hugh's reply settled the question in favour of sending him to England. Both the bishop of Bath and the bishop of Grenoble once more appealed to the chapter and all except the prior were persuaded that the king's request should be granted. Hugh, knowing that the prior would not consent, agreed to be guided by the prior's decision. Then the bishop of Grenoble led the prior aside and implored him to make this sacrifice.

The prior could only call God to witness that he would never tell Hugh to go. Never would he call upon Hugh to abandon him in his old age and to plunge the whole house into mourning.

And now all except Hugh were begging and praying the old man to send Hugh to England, and prior Guigo, his words choking him as he spoke, surrendered. He turned to the bishop of Grenoble and said : ' You are our bishop, our father, our brother. If you say dom Hugh is to go I will make no further objection. I can't send him away of my own will, I can only leave the matter to you ; do as you will and whatever you decide I will abide by it.'

It was left to the bishop of Grenoble, and the chapter urged him to declare what should be done.

Then the bishop reminded them how St Benedict had parted with the son of his special love, St Maurus, who was needed to found a new monastery a long way off, and how the reluctance of the brothers to lose St Maurus had been gently rebuked by St Benedict when he pointed out that none should grieve at the will of God.

To Hugh the bishop declared explicitly : ‘ The hour has come when you must follow him in whose footsteps you have always sought to tread. From that most exalted and sacred peace in the bosom of the Godhead did the only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father take our human nature upon himself for the salvation of mankind ; so must you also make the sacrifice of your quiet and peaceful cell and the companionship of the brethren. Make it bravely, my son, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, who will reward you after this exile in his kingdom. In his name do I, his unworthy servant, command you to depart and in virtue of holy obedience to accept the charge now laid upon you. Go in peace with these venerable ambassadors who have travelled so far to seek you. Go to England and there build up and govern our new foundation.’

Hugh threw himself at the bishop’s feet and implored him not to send him away. But the decision was made and Hugh seeing that it was not to be altered said no more. With all his brothers of the Grande Chartreuse he exchanged the kiss of peace and then departed with the embassy. A few days

later he was received very graciously by king Henry and provided with an escort.

And so Hugh journeyed to Witham, and the few monks who were left there welcomed the new prior with great joy, as though he had been an angel sent from God.

VII

PRIOR OF WITHAM

FROM the mountains he loved, from the everlasting hills came Hugh to the rain and the mist of Somerset ; from that house of God and gate of heaven in the range of the Grande Chartreuse to a handful of wretched huts in a clearing in woodlands ; a dreary settlement in a king's forest. Nothing had been planned for a church for the monks, no site marked out for cells or cloisters. Nothing had been said of compensation to the occupants of the land and buildings which the king had given to the Carthusian order.

Hugh was now forty and prior of Witham, where as yet no priory stood, where everything remained to be done. He at once faced the situation and set about the work. The years of ordered discipline, the fine training in obedience left no room for fretful indulgence in regret or feeling of disappointment ; pride could not whisper a protest against the personal discomfiture, nor self-pity allow a sense of irritation at the depressing environment ; for pride in Hugh, the Carthusian, there was none, and of self-pity he was ignorant.

Banished from the Grande Chartreuse to this desolate spot in Somerset, the prior of Witham

neither hesitated nor looked back. God was to be worshipped, and the will of God accomplished, as well in this remote corner of the king of England's damp and misty realm as in the clear and bracing atmosphere of the high mountains of Grande Chartreuse. When there is work to be done, and on Hugh was the work laid, the wish to be elsewhere is weakness, to repine a futility, and a hindrance ; a sin against the vow of obedience. No murmur of dismay or word of disappointment came from Hugh when he looked upon the dismal scene and considered the needs of his monks. With the tender heart, large and generous in its inclusions—so that lepers and the mentally deranged, the aged and little children, the outcast and criminal, the forgotten and neglected dead, the birds and wild creatures of the fields, found rest in it—went the hard head that could plan and execute. Obedience had taught him to command the obedience of others. As procurator at the Grande Chartreuse, Hugh, serving the community, had won experience in the management of men. He knew that the life of religion was distracted, wasted and brought to confusion for want of simple attention to the necessary detail of daily routine. In the cloister, as without, responsibility, unless accompanied with mastery in economy, can play havoc with souls.

And Hugh, it was proved, had a natural aptitude for this mastery ; he was a good manager, gifted with the penetrative imagination we call tact that belongs to an enlightened understanding of one's neighbour ; and he had the simplicity of the large-hearted who speak heart to heart because their

affections are disinterested. Far too wise to seek the burden of responsibility—shrinking in distress of mind every time it was forced upon him—Hugh, once the burden was upon him, would never surrender the responsibility till authority sanctioned release.

He had the capacity to carry on with even mind, while the whole man yearned for the peace and solitude of cloistered hermitage. In that short spell of youth at St Maximin Hugh had exhibited his natural aptitude for government and twenty years had passed since that season at St Maximin, twenty years of self-mastery.

The first business at Witham was to clear the ground and mark the site for the monastery with its two churches, for choir monks and lay brothers respectively ; its cells and cloisters. The charter-house is not a missionary enterprise ; it is a house of prayer, a hermitage, the home of a self-governing community devoted to the praise of God.

Before a start could be made a just settlement must be effected with the existing occupiers. 'Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain who build it.' Hugh called together the king's tenants of Witham, and the fear of eviction which had brooded over the neighbourhood since the coming of the Carthusians was removed. To the terms Hugh proposed no man took exception. Fair and adequate compensation should be paid for the disturbance with lands granted elsewhere. As for the serfs they were free to choose liberty or take up service on some other manor of the king, without loss of goods.

And to this day we have records of grants of land at North Curry to Witham men who were thus dispossessed.⁷ But of the serfs all that is told is that some chose freedom from servitude and the others remained in the king's service.

The Austin Canons of Bruton, who owned a chapel and lands at Witham, were recompensed for dispossession with a church at South Petherton and rights of woodland at Bryncombe.⁸

To all this the king consented when Hugh explained what had to be done. Henry approved the plans Hugh had drawn up but demurred at paying money in compensation for the buildings. Hugh said firmly that he would not enter into possession at Witham while ever a penny of what was justly due remained unpaid. These poor people had built their huts and sheepfolds, which were strictly their property, and it would be wrong to take possession until the owners were compensated. Henry somewhat ruefully yielded ; there was a persuasiveness in this new prior of Witham that was irresistible. Still Hugh was not content. He wanted the old ramshackle buildings the king had just bought.

‘See what a rich man I have made you, my lord king ! you now own a lot of houses on your lands.’

‘That’s all very well,’ said the king, ‘but I’m not particularly anxious to get rich in this way ; a few more bargains of this sort and I shall be ruined. Besides, what possible use are these old buildings to me ?’

‘Then,’ said Hugh, ‘if your majesty does not really want these huts I wish you would give them

to me, for I have not got a roof over my head at the present time.'

At this unexpected request the king stared in astonishment at the prior.

'What a very odd person you are,' he said at last. 'Here am I about to build you a new monastery and you ask for these tumble-down cabins. I wonder what you want them for?'

It was not seemly, Hugh quietly replied, that the king should trouble himself about such trifling matters as the why and wherefore of the request. 'It is the only thing I have asked for myself, surely you won't hesitate over so modest a favour?'

'Well,' said the king, 'this is something that I have never met before. Here you are, a complete stranger, and you almost force me to give up my property. I suppose I had better do what you tell me at once, before you have time to impose harder terms on me.'

So Hugh having got the property immediately presented it to its former owners. The materials of their old homesteads were now theirs, the prior explained, and they could either sell them or remove them. The news of this fair and kindly treatment spread quietly over the countryside and there was an end of all prejudice against the Carthusian monks of Witham.

The king in the presence of Hugh yielded all that was asked. Face to face with this man of God, Henry recognized power and influence in the prior of Witham and knew that such goodness was rare in his kingdom. Often when the king was hunting in Selwood Forest he would make a point of seeing

the prior, and after every interview praised him the more. When the king asked for his counsel the prior would speak plainly of the hurt done to religion and to the realm by the royal policy of retaining the revenues of bishoprics and appointing unworthy prelates in defiance of the canons of the church. It was wrong, said Hugh, to make bishops of the king's favourites and to give benefices to courtiers ; and it would call down the punishment of heaven. It was for the king to leave the clergy free to choose whom they would according to the canon law and then to give his support to the man duly elected.

Henry listened and approved. Hugh's company charmed him, for here was a clerk of conspicuous holiness, who neither flattered nor cringed, but spoke with truth and spoke good sense ; here was a priest who asked for no preferment ; a monk and a warm-hearted friendly monk who wanted nothing for himself, but was clearly anxious for the welfare of the king and his people. The shining sincerity of prior Hugh delighted the king, and the prior's regard for the king was plain. On political questions Hugh was silent. Statesmanship was for statesmen. For Hugh the kingdom of God and his justice was the sole business of a Carthusian.

But the king could not always be hunting in Selwood Forest and listening to the good words of the prior of Witham. There were troubles in France, with sons at war with one another or in rebellion against their father. At home there were royal enactments (Assize of Arms, 1181), for the arming of all freemen according to their rank, to be enforced. Away from Hugh and surrounded by courtiers

Henry forgot the excellent advice and went on putting favourites into church benefices and leaving other benefices unfilled that the crown might draw the revenues. Henry even appointed his illegitimate son Geoffrey (whose mother was *not* fair Rosamund)⁹ to the see of Lincoln ; Geoffrey a good soldier, and loyal to his father as Henry, Richard and John were not, but no clerk. He had the grace to retire when the pope insisted that he must either resign the bishopric or proceed to holy orders, and eventually became archbishop of York.

The very priory of Witham which the king had undertaken to build at his own expense was forgotten. Twice did Hugh send deputations to wait on the king, to explain that the workmen were clamorous for their wages, and that everything was at a standstill until the king fulfilled his promise. On both occasions Henry fobbed off the patient monks with promises to pay—and sent no money.

Once more depression overclouded the monks of Witham ; it seemed as though their priory would never be erected ; that their new prior would fail as his predecessors had failed.

Gerard the lay brother had no good opinion of kings and no confidence in the promises of kings. Action must be taken, he told the prior, and taken promptly. How much longer were they to put up with this treatment ? Why couldn't the prior himself go to the king and tell him plainly that if the royal promises were not kept and the monastery built, then the monks would go back to their own country ? As it was the whole Carthusian order was made a

laughing-stock by the king's conduct. If the prior himself wouldn't speak out to the king as he deserved to be spoken to, then let him (brother Gerard) go with the prior and say what had to be said.

Hugh knew the piety and devotion of brother Gerard, knew him for a true son of St Bruno and promptly decided to call the community together. All the monks were agreed that the position was desperate and that the prior himself should go to the king and take brother Gerard with him. Hugh therefore said he would go, and he took for companions Gerard and the very old lay brother Ainard—who was still full of lively courage. Hugh warned Gerard not to lose patience and impressed upon the impetuous lay brother the need for speaking with gentleness and moderation. It might be that the king was doing this just to try them, in order to see if they possessed the patience which they were bound by the vows of their holy religion to attain.

When the deputation arrived at the court the king received it with every sign of respect and listened attentively while the prior appealed to him for the needs of Witham. Again Henry promised that money should be sent, gave assurance that the monastery would be completed, and apologized for the delay. But no money was forthcoming, neither did the king fix any definite date for sending supplies. Brother Gerard could stand it no longer. Were they after all to be made fools of again and to return empty-handed? Let the king at least hear what brother Gerard thought of such shabby treatment.

So brother Gerard spoke out, nor could the prior restrain him, though he sought to check the impetuous and long pent-up stream of passionate indignation that poured from the old lay brother.

‘You can now do what you please, my lord king,’ brother Gerard began ; ‘you can finish the monastery or you can let it alone ; we’ll have nothing more to do with it.’ In vain the prior urged him to take a kindlier tone. ‘As far as I am concerned,’ went on brother Gerard, ‘I’ve done with you and your kingdom and am going back to the Grande Chartreuse. Do you think you are doing us a favour doling out your bread to us in this mean fashion ? We don’t need your charity. It is far better to go back to our barren rocks in the mountains than to haggle with a man who thinks that every penny spent on the salvation of his soul is frittered away. Let the king keep his money which he clings to so fondly ; one day he will have to give it up for good and then it will go to some spendthrift of an heir. In that day neither our Lord Jesus Christ nor his servants will touch it.’

The old man paused and was silent. The prior was uneasy and never afterwards could recall the outbreak without feeling uncomfortable. Was this the way to talk to kings ? No one spoke for several minutes, but Henry looked at the prior who sat with his head bowed. Henry was not the man to take offence at plain speaking ; he too had his outbursts, less frequent now than when those fatal words fell from him that brought martyrdom to archbishop Thomas. Brother Gerard was no mealy-mouthed flatterer, no weakling this stout old

fellow ; Henry wondered what his friend prior Hugh thought of it and broke the oppressive silence with the question :

‘ You, holy man, what are you thinking about ? Are you also going to take yourself off and leave us and our kingdom ? ’

‘ No, my lord king,’ Hugh answered gently, ‘ I will not leave you, for I don’t despair of you. But I do feel a great pity for you ; for you have so many cares, so many things to do, so many hindrances ; and these things prevent you from attending to the health of your soul. You are busy even now with other affairs. But when God gives you time to think of it you will do all you have promised, you will finish the good work you have begun.’

On that the king jumped up and embraced the prior. ‘ As I hope to be saved I swear you never shall leave my kingdom as long as I live. It’s to you I shall come for advice for my soul’s good, and it’s with your help I’ll make good resolutions for the future.’

There and then the king ordered the money needed to complete the monastery to be paid to the prior. After that the building went on apace, the good work prospered.

Books were needed at Witham, for the prior remembered the glorious library at the Grande Chartreuse and knew how the religious life, the solitary life in especial, languished without a full measure of reading. Above all, the book of books, the sacred scriptures, were his study and delight. ‘ Our pleasure and our treasure when the soul is at peace,’ Hugh would say, ‘ our weapons of war

in the day of battle, our food in hunger, our medicine when we are sick.' On feast days when the prior dined with the community no one was more attentive to the reading. 'His eyes were on the table, his hands on his plate, his ears towards the book, his heart towards God.' In his own cell he always read during his meals, and the sacred scriptures were the condiment that sweetened the hard and scanty fare.

But books were scarce and money to copy manuscripts there was none until the king heard from Hugh of the needs of the priory library. How much money was wanted to buy parchment? asked the king, and the prior said that a silver mark would buy enough to keep them busy for a long time. 'What a covetous man you are!' answered the king. 'One whole silver mark!' And he gave him ten silver marks for the purchase of parchment.

The king also promised he would present a complete bible of the Old and New Testaments to the priory, and having promised made enquiries where such a bible could be found. As it happened the monks of St Swithun at Winchester had but recently finished a very beautiful copy of the bible for use in the refectory, and the king being told of this at once sent for the prior of St Swithun's and said he really must have it and would pay a handsome price. The prior dare not refuse and the bible was brought to the king, who immediately sent it to Witham. Hugh and his monks rejoiced at the gift and of course knew nothing of how the king had come by it. Not long after this, one of the Winchester monks came on a visit to the Carthusians, and Hugh showed him the splendid bible, so beautifully written

and of so excellent a text. The good monk said he was glad their bible had come to the Carthusians, they did not know at Winchester what the king had done with it. Hugh, astonished and distressed at the monk's story, insisted that the bible must be returned at once to the king, and he asked to be forgiven for having in ignorance done this wrong. But the monk, alarmed at the thought of what the king might do if the book were returned to him, and supposing he would certainly visit his displeasure on the priory of St Swithun, assured Hugh that it was a real happiness to them all at Winchester that their bible was at Witham.

Then Hugh said that to make such happiness a lasting happiness the bible must be restored. The king should not be told, and the monk must take the book with him ; the king would never know. So the monks of St Swithun received their bible as a present from the prior of Witham ; and while they rejoiced at the return of their beautiful manuscript their hearts were lifted up at the large and gracious charity displayed.

The good work prospered at Witham, the monastery walls rose steadily. The Carthusian life of prayer deepened with the years. In the few short hours given to sleep by the prior it was said by those who had business to come near him that they often heard him murmur *Amen, amen* while he slept, as though he were still at prayer.

Many things came to St Hugh in his dreams—and he had the habit of going to sleep immediately he laid down to rest ; if he were awakened before the hour for rising Hugh would either drop off to

sleep again without waste of time, or he would get up and go to prayer.

The wild birds became his friends, and knew him for one to whom they could safely come for food. As at the Grande Chartreuse small birds made a habit of visiting Hugh in his cell, perching on the table, eating out of his hand. A wild goose called *burneta*, whom he fed, was also a daily visitor, disappearing only when her eggs were to be hatched, and then returning to the prior's cell followed by her brood of goslings.

And as the birds were drawn to him, so were young children. It was while he was prior of Witham (and probably in 1184) that Hugh was summoned to attend a general chapter of the Carthusian order at the Grande Chartreuse. He made a point of calling at the castle of Avalon where his brother William still lived, and there to his great content the nurse left Hugh in charge of the newest baby—not yet old enough to talk—while she was called away. The infant gurgled with joy and held on to his uncle's finger. An intimacy was at once established, an understanding set up. There were many occasions later when children and the very babies in arms fell in love at first sight with Hugh the Carthusian.

The life at Witham had its hours of happiness, but it was not always a path of roses for the prior. There were vexations without and disappointments within.

The foresters were a constant source of vexation to Hugh, who hated the forest laws and the savage penalties, the insolences, the bullying and tyranny these laws made possible. Though Witham priory

with its lands and tenements was exempt from all interference by the king's foresters, and free of all forest dues, still Selwood Forest lay all around the monastery and the prior knew too well what hurt was done to his neighbours by the keepers of the royal forest. They oppressed harshly the poor and no man dared say them nay—except prior Hugh in whose eyes injustice to the poor was as an insult to God himself. Hugh held these foresters in abhorrence for their cruelty to the peasants and declared they were rightly called foresters, since the word *forester* (*forestarius foris stare*) meant one who stands outside, 'for they stand outside the kingdom of God.'

Once when the prior went to see the king he found the ante-chamber of the royal palace full of indignant foresters who had just been denied an audience and were speaking in no complimentary language of the king.

'What men are you,' said the prior, 'that dare speak in this way?'

'We are foresters.'

'Then remain *forestarii*, outside.'

The king coming out of his inner chamber to greet the prior overheard the retort and burst out laughing. But Hugh was in no laughing mood. 'My words apply to you as well, my king. The poor, unhappy people who are tortured by your foresters will enter heaven while you and your foresters will stand outside.'

The king took the rebuke in good part. He liked a man who spoke his mind without fear and had right on his side.

Disappointments there were within the priory. Not caused by the companions who journeyed with Hugh from the Grande Chartreuse ; nor yet by those stout lay brothers Gerard and the aged Ainard was the spirit of unity disturbed. The trouble came with priests who too late in life were attracted by the fame and sanctity of the Carthusian order, and desired to embrace the discipline of the rule.

Hugh was always reluctant to receive monks from other orders, or priests of fixed habits, untrained in the rule of religion. But brother Andrew a monk of Muchelney and its sacrist, and Alexander a secular canon of Lewes and a learned clerk, were, when they presented themselves at Witham, clergy of high character prepared to make no small sacrifices to become Carthusians. So Hugh admitted them as postulants and was made sorry for it.

The mischief that can be caused in any household or community by a single sulky or disaffected person is notorious. The atmosphere of peace became overcast ; tranquillity of mind, so essential if the family is to enjoy spiritual health, is expelled when murmurs of discontent are heard, and the whisper gets abroad that the house is divided against itself. Andrew, the ex-sacrist, defamed the prior, the Carthusian order and this particular Witham priory and wished himself back at Muchelney. Alexander, the ex-canon, went so far as to say that Hugh had got him there under false pretence, entrapped him in a terrible solitude, where wild beasts roamed, and all human society was denied him ; where he saw nobody day after day and could only stare at the walls which enclosed him.

Hugh understood the mental distresses that overtake the novice in religion ; the gloom of spirit and sense of desolation, the feeling of weariness and utter boredom at the divine office. It is a common experience of monk and hermit—of all who follow the religious life—the distaste for prayer, the strong impulse to revolt, to get outside and be free. Hugh understood it all and gently and persuasively sought to keep these two unquiet minds to the path they had chosen. But nothing he said made any difference ; in their discontent the two indulged but more copiously their ill-humour with the priory and all that pertained to it. To the distraction and disturbance within the community caused by these uncongenial spirits and their grumbling was added the scandal of their departure. For in time Hugh decided that it were better to bear the bitterness of disappointment and let them depart, than let them remain to spread disaffection in the priory.

Alexander before he left tried to get his old fellow student, Peter of Blois, archdeacon of Bath on his side, complaining to him in a letter that amongst other things he was not allowed to say Mass every day.

For answer he got in reply a long remonstrance from the archdeacon and a string of reproaches. Alexander by his prevarications was seeking to discredit the holiness and the fame of the Carthusian order ; he was turning from the bread of heaven and yearning for the flesh pots, in this desire for a monastery where he would be more indulgently treated. In the charterhouse was opportunity for penance and for learning the secret of solitude with

its peace of mind, and the mystery of contemplation and lasting joy in the Holy Spirit. To have taken the vows of the order and then to speak ill of the order, making a pretence of uneasiness that he was not allowed to say Mass daily—when St Benedict and the hermits Paul and Anthony were not even priests, and the apostles Peter and Paul as far as we know never offered the Holy Sacrifice every day—was treachery. Besides even this excuse was worthless ; for although it was not the rule of the order for its priests to say Mass daily, permission could be given, and had been given by his superiors, to be dispensed from this rule. The prior had been too gentle with him ; it would have been more prudent to have treated him with greater sternness. Perhaps it was the inability to employ his leisure in prayer and meditation after so many years of study that had brought this restlessness. However, if Alexander must leave the Cistercian order might suit him. But, after all, the things he found bitter and unpalatable in the Carthusian life would be sweetened by love, and to leave the charterhouse for a monastery less strict in rule might be but to build himself a house in hell.¹⁰

There was nothing for it, since the letter of arch-deacon Peter moved neither Alexander nor Andrew to a better mind, than for the recalcitrant pair to depart. Hugh, therefore, bade them leave the priory since their hearts were turned from the Carthusian life.

Brother Andrew returned ingloriously to his monastery at Muchelney, and Alexander, the learned canon, entered the abbey of Reading which

belonged to the monks of Cluny. After a while Alexander found Reading not to his liking and longed to be back at Witham. But Hugh, who was then bishop of Lincoln, would not hear of it when Alexander begged to be allowed to go back. The Carthusian order was not for men who did not know their own minds and were as straws in the wind when temptation fell upon them. In the more active orders the way of salvation might be found by many for whom the Carthusian rule was not suitable. It was not only for their own good that the unstable and restless in mind must remain outside, the peace of the cloister must not be disturbed by elements uncongenial. The rule for the cloister is above all peace ; and on no account would Hugh let it be broken ; for the cloister without peace may become a veritable hell ; with peace it is the outer court of paradise.

Five years did Hugh rule Witham charterhouse as prior. The monastery was not completed when he was called to be bishop of Lincoln, but the greater part was built, and of stone that it might endure. He warned the monks against wooden structures that were liable to catch fire.

VIII

BISHOP OF LINCOLN

THE scandal of the vacant bishopric of Lincoln, a scandal deplored by St Thomas of Canterbury, was at last to be ended. The vast diocese, which stretched from the Humber to the Thames and covered the counties of Lincoln, Northampton, Leicester, Rutland, Huntingdon, Bedford, Hertford, Buckingham and Oxford, had been without a bishop since the death of Robert Chesney in 1167—save for one year—1183-84—when Walter the Cornishman, archdeacon of Oxford, held the see before proceeding to the archbishopric of Rouen. For ten years the king's son, Geoffrey Plantagenet, enjoyed the revenues—and Geoffrey did at least enrich the cathedral by many gifts, buying back its most cherished ornaments from Aaron, the rich Jew of Lincoln, with whom they had been pledged.

And now, Anno Domini 1186, king Henry knew the man he must have for bishop of Lincoln—his friend dom Hugh, the Carthusian prior of Witham. Every year since the coming of Hugh to England the regard and affection of the king for his Carthusian friend had increased. On a rough crossing from Normandy to England when it seemed that the king and all his ships might be lost Henry had called on

the mercy of God to heed the prayers of 'my Carthusian Hugh' in his cell at Witham or chanting the divine office with his brethren, and had come safely to land. Indeed so lovingly did the king speak of Hugh that gossip spread a report abroad that the prior of Witham was another of the king's illegitimate sons ; and the absurd secret was whispered and circulated for years, even until the death of Richard Cœur de Lion when Adam, the bishop's chaplain and biographer, himself had to contradict it.

Henry having decided that Hugh must be bishop of Lincoln, and being at his palace at Woodstock in May 1186, called a council of state to fill up the vacant bishoprics. No clerks in the service of the crown, it was intimated, were eligible for the episcopal bench. The council was held at the abbey of Eynsham, in Oxfordshire, within easy access of Woodstock, and Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, and Reginald, bishop of Bath, were present. The king announced that the see of Lincoln must be filled and the canons of Lincoln summoned to attend at Eynsham and proceed to an election. The canons arrived, and endeavoured to come to an agreement as to their choice, but failed. Then the name of Hugh, prior of the Carthusian house at Witham, was put before them to the consternation of the canons. Archbishop Baldwin and bishop Reginald strongly supported the king's proposal, but the canons were alarmed and terrified at the proposal. This Hugh of a Carthusian priory in Somerset was a Burgundian it appeared ; he would probably know nothing of their language or the customs of the cathedral chapter of Lincoln.

A hermit to rule over them ! dreadful thought ! How could a monk trained to solitude manage the vast diocese of Lincoln ? The canons were neither irreligious nor worldly beyond their fellows, but their hearts were dismayed and they trembled in mind at the prospect of this recluse, an austere Carthusian, a stranger to all their ways, coming into their midst. Their spiritual lord a Carthusian ! and the king's favourite ! But there it was. Dom Hugh, prior of Witham, was the king's favourite, and the king had requested the canons to elect him, and there was no help for it. Besides the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Wells both spoke most highly of dom Hugh and perhaps it would not turn out so badly after all. In the end a unanimous vote was given by the canons for the prior of Witham and messengers from the canons were sent to the priory with letters from the king and the archbishop announcing the result of the election, and calling on Hugh to present himself at court in order that a date might be fixed for consecration to the see of Lincoln.

Hugh having read the letters answered that this way of electing bishops would not do at all. He wrote to the canons explaining that he quite understood the king's natural desire to show his good-will to the monk whom he had brought from so far to England. However unworthy he might be the king wished to honour him and he understood it. The archbishop too being a monk (for Baldwin had formerly been abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Ford in Devonshire) would reasonably enough be glad to welcome one of the regular clergy as a colleague on the episcopal bench. But the point was it was for

the canons and the canons alone to elect their bishop and they must not be guided by the wishes of the king or archbishop. Besides it was contrary to the law of the church for a bishop to be elected in the king's chapel or at a council of state or in the presence of bishops, or indeed anywhere except in the chapter house of the cathedral of the diocese, unless there was some very grave justification for departure from the ecclesiastical law. Hugh finished off on a personal note : ' My own poor opinion is that this election is quite null and void. You must return to your cathedral, pray for the guidance of the Holy Ghost and, with the blessing of God, hold another election. Neither the royal will nor the will of the archbishop must be your guide in this matter, but the will of God alone. That is all I can say. And may the angel of the Lord be with you on your journey back to Lincoln.'

And from this decision Hugh would not be moved. The canons were astonished and the enthusiastic account given by the messengers of this Carthusian monk increased their wonder. Dom Hugh it seemed was no fanatical austere hermit, but a learned and most winning person, as modest as he was sincere. With one accord the canons returned to Lincoln and there in the chapter-house duly proceeded to elect dom Hugh for their bishop.

Again were messengers sent to Witham, and this time it was made plain that the election was in every way canonical and that the chapter desired Dom Hugh, the prior of Witham, for bishop.

And again Hugh having read the letters brought to him replied that he could not accept the bishopric.

He was surprised that they should want a man like himself, a solitary, to leave his solitude, the solitude he loved, for such a responsible office. It was not in his power to accept such a charge, for he was a monk under obedience, and as the general of the order had made him prior of Witham he could not possibly leave his post unless the general relieved him.

This second refusal stirred the canons ; they were now determined that they would have this Carthusian prior and no other. His sanctity and humility marked him as an exceptional man ; the canons were as eager that Hugh should be their bishop as they had formerly been reluctant and full of misgivings.

A highly important embassy was immediately despatched to the Grande Chartreuse, bearing not only the request of the canons but also letters from king Henry and archbishop Baldwin praying the general of the order to command the prior of Witham under obedience to accept the office offered to him. The general of the order, dom Jancelyn, knew prior Hugh in the old days at the Grande Chartreuse and had seen him at meetings of the general chapter. He had not the least doubt that Hugh was fitted to be a bishop, and as the Carthusian order had sent its sons to be bishops elsewhere when demanded, notably at Grenoble, there was no ground for refusal. Therefore the general of the order granted the request that was made to him and addressed a formal command to Hugh to resign his priorship and accept the dignity offered to him, submitting to it as to the yoke of God.

The order to depart from the priory at Witham

did not take Hugh by surprise. He had postponed the day when he must leave, he could not do more than that. It was the will of God that a bishop should be appointed to this see of Lincoln and it was the will of God that the prior of Witham should obey the commands of his superior. There was no more to be said. With prayer and fasting he prepared to obey the call and when the hour of departure arrived sadly he bade farewell to the solitude he loved, besought the prayers of the sorrow-stricken community, and then set out.

It was a gallant and bravely equipped escort that awaited the bishop-elect ; knights and canons, with chaplains, squires and servants to do honour to the king's friend, the bishop-elect of the great see of Lincoln. Only one person in the procession was but poorly arrayed and that was the bishop-elect himself. The shabbily dressed monk who rode in the midst of the canons was still a Carthusian, would be indeed a Carthusian till his death ; he was not yet a bishop and therefore it did not behove him to put off his habit.

They were put to shame, canons and knights, chaplains and esquires and servants, the latter in especial, by the mean attire of the principal member of the cavalcade. And to make it worse the bishop-elect insisted on carrying a wretched bundle of sheepskins, tied to the saddle-bow, which he said was his bedding. Of course while they were journeying through the country it did not matter so much how the bishop-elect was dressed, there was nobody to see him, and no one to comment on the horrible bundle. But it was too embarrassing when they

came to towns and remarks were passed by irreverent burgesses. So just before the procession entered the city of Winchester, where royalty and nobles, it was said, would greet the bishop-elect, a certain chaplain managed to cut the strap which held the odious sheepskins to the saddle-bow, and the offensive bundle fell to the ground. Hugh did not notice the loss ; wrapped in meditation he was aware neither of the embarrassment he caused nor of the dexterous removal of his bedding.

At Marlborough king Henry and archbishop Baldwin welcomed the bishop-elect. Henry was full of joy at the sight of his friend and there and then presented him with gold and silver plate and furniture for his household, besides promising to defray the greater part of the expenses of the consecration.

On St Matthew's Day, September 21, 1186, was St Hugh consecrated by archbishop Baldwin, in the chapel of St Catherine in Westminster Abbey (and William of Northall was consecrated to the see of Worcester on the same day). All the vestments and ornaments that it was necessary for the bishop to put on, from the mitre on his head to the sandals that covered his feet, were at Hugh's request of the simplest and plainest material ; for it was in these same vestments he desired to be buried.

Then having made and sealed a profession of obedience to the archbishop as his metropolitan and primate of the church in England¹¹ Hugh went at once to Lincoln to be enthroned in his cathedral. He stayed the night before his solemn entry into the city at the priory of the canons of the order of St

Gilbert of Sempringham,¹² the priory of St Katharine, which stood south of the city without the walls. In his dreams that night Hugh heard the words of encouragement spoken to him as by the voice of God : ‘ Thou goest to save thy people with the help of God’s anointed.’

In the morning of Michaelmas Day the bishop trod barefoot the road to the cathedral, the people thronging the way and calling down from heaven blessings on the head of their new father in God. His face shone with gentleness and benignity.

The archdeacon of Canterbury was the first to feel the firm touch of the bishop, to shrink from the iron principle that was shaped in the Carthusian way of life. The archdeacon had been sent by archbishop Baldwin to act as his deputy at the enthronement, and the archdeacon expected to receive a handsome honorarium for his services. This payment of fees was the usual thing at enthronements of bishops and abbots but the Third Council of Lateran, held in 1176, had expressly forbidden such payments, decreeing at the same time that no money must be paid for enthroning bishops and abbots, for instituting parish priests, for burying the dead or for administering any sacrament. To the astonishment and discomfort of the archdeacon the new bishop proposed to obey this decree of the council. ‘ I will pay for the throne what I paid for the mitre,’ said bishop Hugh, and the archdeacon was left in shame-faced confusion.

But the bishop was not to be accused of meanness at his enthronement because he refused to sanction the evil practice which Rome had forbidden. A

great feast must be made for all the people of Lincoln to celebrate joyfully the coming of their bishop. It was an event calling for hospitality, the more because it was so long since the city and diocese had been blessed by a bishop.

King Henry with forethought for his friend had sent a man to be the bishop's steward or major-domo at Lincoln, and to the bishop came this steward to ask what should be done for the festivity. To the suggestion that deer in the park belonging to the cathedral might be slain and venison provided, the bishop, himself as a Carthusian no flesh eater, at once agreed. 'And how many deer would my lord bishop have slain?' asked the steward. 'Oh, take three hundred,' the bishop, knowing nothing of venison, answered, 'and if that's not enough then you must take as many more as are wanted.' The steward kept a grave face at this altogether excessive provision for the feast, but of course the story of the bishop's prodigality with the venison was told to the king. It passed into a standing joke in the royal circle, 'the bishop's venison'; it became a proverbial saying when extravagance was mooted, 'the bishop of Lincoln's deer!'

IX

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN AND KING HENRY II

THE friendship of the king and his 'Carthusian Hugh' was in jeopardy shortly after the latter became bishop of Lincoln. At Witham the forest laws and the conduct of the king's foresters vexed the soul of the prior ; vexation pressed more heavily at Lincoln.

The bishop was the servant of God appointed to protect as best he could the people of his diocese from enemies ghostly and temporal ; the shepherd upon whom solemnly was laid the care of his flock. So St Hugh understood the duties and responsibilities of his office. Therefore when he learnt that Galfrid, the king's chief forester, had been harshly ill-treating certain of the tenants of the see of Lincoln, oppressing the bishop's own people without respect to the forest laws, which were cruel enough in all conscience, Hugh did not hesitate. At once he excommunicated the chief forester for violating the laws of God and man by interfering with the bishop's flock. Not a lamb in his flock should be ravaged by foresters or others while Hugh was bishop without the offender being brought to judgment. This Galfrid, the chief forester, should learn

that not with impunity is evil committed in the vineyard of God and hurt done to God's people. Therefore Galfrid, the king's chief forester, was by sentence of Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, declared excommunicate and placed outside the pale of the church ; to be denied all sacraments, and refused Christian burial should he die without repentance and pardon.

The king was furious when they told him what his bishop had done. It was laid down in the Constitutions of Clarendon (1164) that no servant of the king should be excommunicated until the case had first been referred to the king, or, in the king's absence, to the officers of the crown ; and though it was true that the Constitutions owing to the martyrdom of St Thomas had been given up by the king and therefore had not the force of law, still it was understood that the article declaring the king's servants immune from ecclesiastical censure save with the royal consent must be observed throughout the realm.

And here was the king's dear friend, his ' Carthusian Hugh,' but recently and by the express desire of the king made bishop of Lincoln, discharging thunderbolts at a chief forester, excommunicating a head gamekeeper, with no by your leave or with your leave of the royal master of the forests.

The king was not only angry ; for any question of the administration of the forest laws or criticism of his foresters touched him personally. He was hurt that Hugh should have treated him with this scanty respect. The news of this excommunication came to the king while he was with his court at

Woodstock, and as it happened the bishop was at the same time at Dorchester, on the other side of Oxford. It also happened that there was a canonry vacant at the same time which was in the gift of the bishop. Some of the courtiers thought an excellent opportunity had occurred for the bishop to make his peace with the king by giving this canonry or prebend to one of themselves. It would be a compliment to the king to present him with this piece of patronage and it would be a comfortable income for some deserving and needy courtier.

The courtiers knew not what manner of man this Hugh of Lincoln was when they suggested their friendly and conciliatory move.

The king agreeing to the suggestion of his courtiers wrote to the bishop asking for the canonry to be given to him for one of the ministers of the court. If Hugh complied why then Henry could take it as a sign that the bishop was making amends for his rough usage of the chief forester ; but this the king did not set down in words.

Conciliation was not in the mind of bishop Hugh. He did not even write an answer to the king's letter but gave the royal messengers a reply by word of mouth. 'Tell the king,' he said, 'that church benefices are for churchmen and not for courtiers. Not for servants of the king's palace, or the king's treasury, or the king's exchequer, but for servants of the altar is the livelihood of the altar provided, according to Holy Scripture. My lord the king can reward plentifully those in his employment, and for temporal services he can give them temporal rewards. If the king wishes to save his soul he will

allow the soldiers of the King of kings to enjoy the revenues they need without trying to rob them.'

On that Hugh dismissed his visitors, sending no compliments nor excuses to the king. For if the king was angry the bishop was sad. It troubled him that the king should ask favours that could not be granted, should forget what was due to God in the desire to gratify the appetites of man.

The king's anger broke out again when he heard the bishop's reply, especially as the reply lost nothing of its force in the telling. The courtiers of course added fuel to the flame, shaking their heads at the ingratitude of the bishop for whom the king had done everything, pointing out that the bishop had positively insulted the king, and gloomily foretelling a dreadful future, since at the beginning of his episcopate, this foreigner treated the king with contempt and dared to excommunicate a high official of the crown. In short the courtiers regarded the conduct of the bishop of Lincoln with grave misgivings.

The king was provoked, but he had brought his rages under some measure of control. He must see his 'Carthusian Hugh' face to face; there must be explanations, and the misunderstanding cleared up. At the same time the bishop must be made to feel that the king was displeased, and that no more excommunications of the king's servants would be allowed. Messengers were sent a second time to **D**orchester bidding the bishop to the king's presence at Woodstock. Promptly the bishop went, serene in mind and untroubled in heart. For now he was quite sure that he had done right, and could not

indeed have done otherwise either in the matter of the chief forester or the vacant canonry. The king would see this when it was put to him.

As soon as the king was told that the bishop was approaching Woodstock he mounted his horse and ordered his courtiers to follow him into the forest hard by. There on the greensward of an open space the king dismounted and sat down. Next he ordered the courtiers to form a circle and on no account were they to get up when the bishop arrived, or return the bishop's greeting.

And so Hugh found them, the king and his courtiers, all sitting on the ground in a circle and all silent. No one took any notice when he appeared on the scene, no one returned his greeting. What new game was this? Whatever it was and whatever it meant Hugh declined to be embarrassed. He walked quietly up to the king; gently tapped the shoulder of the courtier sitting next to the king to motion him to make room; and then without any fuss and without saying a word seated himself in the courtier's place.

Still the king and his courtiers kept silence.

For Hugh silence was easy; he loved it and was accustomed to it. But silence did not come easily to Henry. The restless king could never be still for long—as his courtiers knew to their cost. He was determined not to break the silence, but he must have something to do. For a while gazing on the ground Henry noticed that one of his fingers was cut; his gloveless hands were always rough and torn with riding. Without speaking to the bishop at his side Henry turned and told a courtier to give him

needle and thread to sew a piece of linen for the damaged finger. The circle watched him ; the king still looked angry. What was going to happen ?

The bishop smiled. His friend the king was obviously uncomfortable. It was too ridiculous the whole performance. Hugh broke the silence. ' How like you are now to your relatives of Falaise ! ' he said.

On this Henry could keep it up no longer. He burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter and the courtiers, who for the most part did not in the least understand the point of Hugh's remark, stared in blank astonishment. A few guessed there was a personal allusion and were even more astonished at the bishop's temerity.

But Henry's wrath evaporated in the fit of laughter. It was his friend, his ' Carthusian Hugh ' who was at his side ; and his friend had dispersed the angry thoughts, dismissed the black mood that brooded over him, by making light of all the trouble, simply poking fun at him ! The king had to explain the joke to his courtiers.

' You don't understand the liberty which this foreigner has just taken with me,' he said. ' The mother of my great-grandfather, William, who conquered this land came of common people ; she was quite humbly born at Falaise, a town in Normandy, which is famous for its tan-yards. Seeing me busy with a needle and thread he dared to make fun of me ; reminding me that I was like my ancestors the glove-makers of Falaise.'

The courtiers thought it a queer joke ; still, as the king said it was funny it must be correct.

The king turned to the bishop ; the time had come for explanations. ‘ Tell me, holy man, why did you excommunicate my chief forester ? And why did you refuse my small request without giving any reason or sending any letter by my messengers ? ’

The bishop answered : ‘ My lord king, I know all you did to get me made a bishop ; and just because of what you did it is your soul I should endanger if I proved unworthy and was not careful of the charge you have had committed to my care. For your sake I must be faithful to the diocese entrusted to me. That is why I was obliged to punish with the censure of the church one who oppressed my flock, and for the same reason I could not give a canonry to one who had no canonical right to it. Ought I to have consulted your excellence before doing these things ? I don’t think so. It seemed to me entirely unnecessary and superfluous to consult you. For I knew well your own good sense would tell you I had done right and would approve of what I had done.’

The king was more than satisfied. It was the answer of a just man. Henry took Hugh in his arms begging his friend always to remember him in his prayers.

Nothing more was said of the vacant prebend, and the chief forester was left to make his peace with the church. Which he did. For Galfrid, convinced that he had done wrong, put himself and the men under him to penance, and having submitted to a public flagellation—at that time the common penance of distinguished persons—the sentence of excommunication was lifted. Henceforth Hugh had

no more loyal friend and supporter in the whole diocese of Lincoln than Galfrid, the chief forester.

But the king in the few and evil days that remained for him saw but little of St Hugh. Terrible news reached Europe that Jerusalem, the holy city, had fallen to the Saracens ; and Henry and his enemy Philip of France, and the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and the sons of Henry all took the cross and vowed to go on crusade. Then the king of France broke his covenant of peace with Henry, and Henry's sons Richard and John turned against their father so that the last hours of king Henry were full of bitterness. He died in France in July 1189, far from his ' Carthusian Hugh,' in the arms of Geoffrey, his one faithful son, leaving in his will bequests to the Carthusian order, and other houses of religion.

X

THE WORK OF A BISHOP

WHEN Remigius, the monk of Fecamp, followed to England in the train of William the Conqueror, and was made bishop of Dorchester by Oxford, the place seemed to him so poor and mean a place for the bishop's seat, besides being too far from the centre of the diocese, that he chose the illustrious city of Lincoln as more worthy. Having bought lands on the crown of the hill hard by the castle, he there built his cathedral, strong and beautiful, which he dedicated to Our Lady, virgin of virgins. Remi also founded twenty-one prebendal stalls for canons and bishop. Time, with fire and earthquake, brought ruin on bishop Remi's Norman church and St Hugh started building the cathedral that stands to this day, a 'miracle in stone,' engaging Geoffrey of Noiers (an Englishman for all his name) for architect. The cathedral was not finished in the lifetime of Hugh, but the choir of four bays with the transepts and eastern chapels, and apse were completed, and a new style in architecture, the Early English or pure pointed Gothic, was initiated, a joy for ever and the wonder of contemporaries. For this new church at Lincoln which bishop Hugh was building in honour of the mother of God, this church of a new style and

graceful design seemed to surpass all other English cathedrals in the grace of its proportions.¹³

To find money for the payment of architect, masons, bricklayers and labourers the bishop organized a diocesan association, and this association provided funds annually, sometimes to the extent of a thousand marks. St Hugh himself took the greatest interest in the construction of the cathedral and in the welfare of its builders. So closely would the bishop identify himself with the work that he might be seen at times engaged in stone-cutting or carrying bricks and mortar. And this episcopal bricklaying was the occasion of a miracle of healing. For on one Good Friday a lame man seeing the bishop carrying a hod, had faith that he would be cured of his lameness if he too could but be allowed to carry that same hod. The hod was given to the suppliant and placed on his shoulder and almost immediately the crippled man stood upright, threw away his crutches and walked unhindered. He was completely cured.

The cathedral of Lincoln, for all its beauty, is but the candlestick in the city set on a hill. The faithful clergy and lay folk are the light to illuminate the whole diocese—and perhaps beyond.

Hugh at his consecration had appealed to archbishop Baldwin to give him wise counsellors. ‘God has given me the will to do right,’ said the new bishop, ‘and you must help me by giving me the means. Coming as a stranger it is impossible for me to find the good and prudent men I need, so I beg of you to let me have for fellow workers a few clergy whom you have trained.’

Thereupon archbishop Baldwin sent two priests, men of learning and virtuous life, Robert of Bedford and Roger de Rolleston. Robert died quite soon after joining the bishop of Lincoln, but Roger became archdeacon of Leicester, dean of the cathedral chapter and one of the bishop's executors. He lived to give evidence of miracles when the cause of St Hugh's canonization was brought forward.

The school of theology which St Hugh founded made Lincoln famous for its learning and drew scholars from all other parts of England. The chancellor of the diocese, William of Leicester (commonly called William de Monte because he had lectured in theology at Mont-Sainte-Genevieve in Paris), a prolific writer on holy scripture, was the head of this college and its not least distinguished member was Gerald the Welshman. Giraldus had but a poor opinion of his fellow clergy, disliking monks even more than secular clergy. The criticism of Giraldus and of Walter Map (or Mapes), archdeacon of Oxford and subsequently precentor of Lincoln, presents clerical life at its worst in the twelfth century. The testimony awarded to St Hugh is, therefore, the more valuable. Giraldus praises the bishop for his sanctity and for his learning. As for St Hugh's learning : Giraldus decided that archbishop Baldwin, the Cistercian, was *affatim literatus*—quite a good scholar, but St Hugh was the Ciceronian *literatissimus*—a very learned man. Of St Hugh's holiness Giraldus is assured. While declaring that bishops who are taken from the ranks of the secular clergy are in general far superior to those taken from religious orders, Giraldus makes an exception

in favour of St Hugh and his predecessor Remigius.

Still, even St Hugh was not entirely without weakness in the eyes of Giraldus, who had his own case against the bishop over the matter of the rectory of Chesterton in Oxfordshire. The patronage of this living, to which Giraldus was presented, was disputed, and deprived of the piece of preferment by the archbishop of Canterbury, Giraldus did not get the support from St Hugh that he expected.

‘ Who will stand forth as the champion of Christ’s church to defend the rights of the clergy, if the bishop of Lincoln, the only man in this land upon whom our hopes are built, grow faint-hearted (which God forbid !) and give up the struggle ? ’ wrote Giraldus in his very full account of the grievance.

Patronage, a responsibility that is always an anxiety to the conscientious, weighed heavily on St Hugh. In the administration of the vast diocese of Lincoln he took infinite pains to appoint the right clergy, to enforce celibacy and to stop the persistent scandal of vicarages descending from father to son. To that end the bishop encouraged the religious orders to become patrons of livings, and made vicarages perpetual ; i.e. for life ; and not liable to expropriation when a son—or heir—came of age.

In the cathedral of Lincoln the bishop had the happiest relations with his chapter. Nothing would persuade him to give canonries to king’s friends or absentee clergy. That the canons must reside in the diocese and take their share of the cathedral services was a rule not in any circumstances to be violated. To an eminent theologian of Paris who hinted a

willingness to accept a canonry in Lincoln the bishop replied that he would be delighted to welcome so distinguished a priest if he would come and live in the diocese ; but that the eminent theologian was not prepared to do, desiring the livelihood without leaving his studies in Paris. On the dean and chapter the bishop solemnly laid the responsibility of seeing that non-resident canons sent vicars to take their place in the cathedral, authorizing the detention of income when this was not done.

The peace of the cloister was the bishop's ideal for the clerical life throughout the diocese. ' Nothing in this life is to be compared with the blessing of peace,' said St Hugh ; ' nothing is so much to be avoided as that which causes strife and disunion.'

However learned a priest might be, if his private life were irregular, or if he were a source of ill-will, enmity and faction, St Hugh would not have him in the diocese. With the many unlearned clerks the bishop bore patiently, provided they were clergy of modest and good life.

The advantage to the bishop of living harmoniously with his clergy St Hugh pointed out to his brothers of the episcopal bench : ' I have found out the need of cherishing peace and concord with those under my authority. By so doing I fear no mortal man, not even the king himself ; and I am enabled to keep that peace within my soul which is both the sign and the beginning of the soul's eternal rest.'

Of his canons the bishop spoke warmly. ' Never have these good lords of mine given me cause for uneasiness. Not that they find me over kind and gentle. It's too much the other way, I am afraid,

for I know I am apt to be sharp, and liable to be upset by trifles, when I preside at chapter meetings. Well, they make a virtue of necessity and bear with me as I am, for after all they chose me of their free will to be their bishop.' He owed his canons an immense debt of gratitude, St Hugh went on to say, for their complete obedience. They had never resisted his will since he came amongst them, and he was as certain that not one of them doubted his affection for them all as he was that they were devoted to him.

St Hugh could command both respect and affection. His clergy loved him and revered him. His displeasure frightened people. His excommunications were dreaded.

Yet not entirely could St Hugh carry his clergy with him. In his conflicts with Richard I the bishop stood alone, so fearful were the canons of the king's enmity.

The lay folk in the city of Lincoln and in many a town and hamlet of the far-flung diocese were no less a care on St Hugh than were his clergy. The temporal needs of his flock laid a charge upon the bishop's estate which St Hugh met by setting aside one-third of the episcopal revenues for the relief of the poor and needy. The extent of his private charities and personal gifts no man could measure ; for help being secretly given in so many cases God alone knew how much the bishop distributed in alms.

To the tenants of the cathedral lands he was always a merciful landlord. When the payment of feudal liabilities on the death of a tenant meant

hardship an appeal for relief was never made in vain.

Once when the bishop was riding with the bailiff of a certain manor that belonged to the diocese a poor widow came before him with a pitiful tale. An ox, their most valued possession, was to be taken because her husband, who was but a peasant, was dead ; and without the ox how could the poor widow and her children live ? It was not an exceptional case ; every tenant under feudal law paid heriot at death. 'The heriot was the payment of a debt from the dead man to his lord.'¹⁴ Death duties are a part of our national heritage. All this the bishop and his bailiff knew full well. But a poor widow was asking for mercy, and what could a Christian bishop do ? Was the cry for help to be disregarded and the widow and her children left to starve because the law gave the bishop this ox for heriot ? Impossible for such a bishop as Hugh of Lincoln. Without dismounting the bishop told the suppliant her request was granted ; the heriot should not be imposed. Let her keep the ox, and God prosper her ways.

The bailiff remonstrated. 'My lord, if you give up all your rights in this way you will simply be ruined, and you won't be able to keep up your estate at all, you will lose all your land.'

On that the bishop got off his horse and took up a handful of earth. 'Look, my friend, here is plenty of earth,' he said to the bailiff. 'I can keep all this without depriving that poor widow of her ox. What is the use of possessing so much earth if one loses

heaven? If we are over-strict in demanding payment for debts that are not just we may become bankrupt before God. Shall I be more cruel than death to this poor woman? For death has taken her husband but has still left her with some resources. I cannot take away from this widow what death has left her.'

At another time the bishop excused a son from paying the relief which was due on the death of his father, a knight whose land was held from the diocese.¹⁵ 'It does not seem to me just,' said St Hugh, 'that because a son has lost his father he must also lose so large a sum of money. The single misfortune is surely enough to bear.'

Thus he dealt with the temporal needs of his flock, and for their spiritual needs the bishop gave himself without stint.

On his long rides the bishop was often constrained to give the sacrament of confirmation, sometimes in church, at other times, when no church was near, by the roadside. He always dismounted and with his chaplains conducted the service according to the ritual, and with the same devotion, as though in his own cathedral. Other bishops at that time would confirm the children brought to them without getting off their horses and with a very shortened form of service. It was the custom of the time but not a custom that St Hugh could adopt. The confirmation over, the bishop would depart leaving the blessing of God on all who sought it and carrying the blessing of his people with him; and many who were sick were healed of their sickness by the bishop's prayers and benedictions.

These confirmations so far from adding to his burdens or increasing his weariness gave St Hugh great joy and consolation. Intercourse with young children and with infants in arms was a restorative after the distractions and irritations of grown-up people. And the babies responded to St Hugh's attentions. It was still the common practice to confirm infants, and one of these infants—just six months old—who was confirmed by St Hugh at Newark would do nothing but chuckle with joy and, clutching the bishop's hands tightly, croon with pleasure. Nor would it let go—to the bishop's huge delight. It was difficult, the onlookers said, to know who was more pleased, the bishop or the baby. When St Hugh disengaging a hand offered an apple to his little friend the infant would not look at it and held on the more closely, staring into St Hugh's face and crowing in highest content. The parents, working people, would often recall the confirmation of their baby by the bishop of Lincoln, and mention the mutual attachment.

Rarely was the bishop moved to anger, but when he saw one of his lay servants ill-treating a child the wrath of St Hugh exploded and he soundly cuffed that offending servant. Over and over again he had made it known to his attendants that he would not have children harshly treated or roughly handled, and since neither rebuke nor reprimand were effective, St Hugh came down heavily on the man who dared misuse one of God's little ones.

To God's little ones St Hugh never turned in vain on these long rides from Thames to Humber. He turned to them from the tiresome superstitions

of their elders, pagan superstitions, remnants of heathendom that lingered in town and countryside. Uprooted in one place they arise elsewhere and now in this form, now in that, it seems are never to be utterly driven out of the land. Springs of water and wells at Berkhamstead and High Wycombe were accounted to possess magic qualities and to have for presiding deities spirits that required to be appeased and propitiated. Throughout the years of his episcopate St Hugh, persuading, reasoning, denouncing, sought to get rid of the belief in water-sprites and the superstitious fears engendered.

There were peasants, too, who thought more of luck than of God's grace and wisdom. St Hugh had to contend with such an one ; a man with a child in his arms who ran after the bishop as he was passing through a country village. St Hugh stopped, dismounted, put on his stole and waited patiently, supposing the child was to be confirmed. To his deep vexation the bishop heard that the boy had been already confirmed but that the father wanted his name changed because it would bring better luck, he had been told, if the child had another name. When the bishop in answer to his question was informed that the child had the name of John he was the more indignant. It was deplorable that the man should want so beautiful a name exchanged for another because of some wretched superstition that 'John' was unlucky. In real distress of mind St Hugh turned on the father, 'Instead of the beautiful name he has got do you wish your son to be called rake, or hay-fork ? There, you see how agitated I am by your wicked request.'

The bishop laid a heavy penance on the peasant so that he should not lightly forget how grossly he misunderstood the grace and mercy of God.

‘ He served them, loving them, healing them ; sick or maimed,
Or them that frenzied in some delirious rage.’

St Hugh served his people with the strength of a great love, and in that strength he healed their sickness and frenzy.

On a Sunday morning when the bishop was returning from London and had reached Cheshunt near Waltham Abbey, a crowd surrounded him in the High Street, and poured out a pathetic story of a sailor, one Roger Cothoppe, belonging to the town, who had gone mad on board his ship, dangerously mad, and had to be tied up with ropes and brought home. Would the bishop come and give his blessing to this poor sailor—he lived close by the road—and then the wicked spirit would go out of him ?

It was but a few yards out of the way and the door of the hut was wide open so that the bishop approaching on horseback could see the dreadful plight of the man he had come to heal. Prostrate on the floor of the hut, his head fastened to the door, the eyes bulging, the mouth twitching and gaping, the swollen tongue thrust out, with hands tightly bound to two posts, and the feet fastened to another post, there lay the demoniac. Quickly the bishop dismounted. ‘ This is shocking ! It must be stopped,’ he was heard to say.

Then the bishop made the sign of the cross over

the afflicted man and gently bending down placed his hand upon the ugly gaping mouth, and began to say the beginning of the gospel of St John. The touch of the bishop's hand and the sound of the sacred words at once had a soothing effect. The nervous twitchings stopped, and the man became still, glancing with eyes half opened at the face of St Hugh. When the bishop came to the verse that ends the gospel recited at the conclusion of Mass and uttered the words *plenum gratiæ et veritatis* he stood up and looked tenderly on the much-tortured man. But not yet had the evil spirit entirely been driven out, for the man swiftly put out his tongue and turned away his head from the bishop's gaze. It was the devil's last effort. St Hugh called for water and when it was brought placed salt in it and blessed it. With the holy water he sprinkled the demoniac and the man was presently cured. Before he departed the bishop blessed all who were gathered round the hut and told those who were nearest to the afflicted man to pour some of the holy water down his throat. There was no need for the bishop to remain. The sailor was soon loosed of his bonds and henceforth for the few years that he lived his soul was given to God, his days spent on pilgrimages to the shrines of saints.

On another occasion in Lincoln a certain citizen recovered from a fever only to become a raving maniac. Even when chained he tried to bite all who came near him and recognized neither his wife nor his children. The suggestion was made that the madman should be taken to the bishop, and this was done. His relatives brought him tied down in

a cart to the cathedral and there implored St Hugh to do something for the unhappy wretch.

At once St Hugh, in the full compassion of his mighty heart, sprinkled holy water on the madman, bidding the evil spirit leave him and torment him no longer. The madman almost at once fell back like a dead man, but presently reviving, while they sprinkled him freely with holy water, managed to stand up and, though his hands were tied, moved them to heaven. Those standing by heard the words : ‘ O God I thank Thee ; O holy bishop I thank thee.’ All knew that he had once more become sane. The chains were struck off and quietly the man went home with his family. There was no recurrence of madness, no relapse into insanity ; for the rest of his life the man St Hugh cured at the cathedral retained his senses unimpaired until death took him.

It was thus that St Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, proclaimed the kingdom of God in the twelfth century in this realm of England.

XI

THE BISHOP AND THE JEWS

THE Jews in England were not a large community at the close of the twelfth century ; perhaps not more than two thousand souls in all out of a total population of two millions. But though few in number they were exceedingly wealthy, and outside London in no place more wealthy or more numerous than in Lincoln. The Jews possessed gold, and gold was scarce ; therefore they were the bankers of kings, the financiers of royal and ecclesiastical enterprise ; money-lenders to abbots, barons and knights and lesser men. Since they charged a high price for their loans because the risk was considerable, the Jews were hated and denounced as usurers.

King Henry II held the Jews in his realms as serfs or vassals ; their property was the property of the king and by none but the king might they be molested. Under the protection of the crown the Jews lived securely and prospered while Henry was king. But the natural resentment of a debtor against his creditor festered and irritated the prejudice against an alien race ; anti-Jewish riots occurred when the strong arm dropped.

The riots began in London at the coronation of king Richard, when Jews were espied in the crowd. Rumour sped that the Jews were there to cast an evil spell on the newly crowned king, that Richard wished them slain, and superstitious fear filled the London mob. Massacre and pillage resulted with the burning of the Jewish quarter of the city. Not till next day was Richard's proclamation—declaring the Jews his protected subjects, forbidding all men to injure them—effective; until Richard left England the Jews were left in peace. The anti-Jewish riots were renewed on Richard's departure for Normandy and the excitement of the crusade made things worse. The Jews were attacked as enemies of the cross, and therefore enemies of the crusaders to whom they had lent money.

In the diocese of Lincoln and in his own cathedral the bishop faced the fury of the anti-Jewish mob; in God's name he demanded an end to the wickedness, and would not be denied.

It was at Stamford early in March 1190, when a large number of people were in the town for the fair, that the trouble started. A band of young men who had taken the cross and were about to sail for Palestine became infuriated at the sight of Jews, wealthy and well-dressed, when they, setting out on the crusade, were actually short of money for the expense of their journey. The spectacle made them boil over with indignation. Suddenly and without warning the crusaders invaded the Jewish quarter of the town, and were promptly joined by a crowd of disorderly fellows. Murder and pillage followed and the rioters got away with their plunder,

The news quickly spread to Lincoln and it seemed to the crusaders of St Hugh's city that before they left for the Holy Land they might with no small profit to themselves perform a similar work to that done by their comrades in Stamford, and on a larger scale.

The conspiracy was known in Lincoln before its organizers were ready for action. The Jews, forewarned, fled for protection to the Castle, for the most part removing their valuables with them. A mob of clerics and laymen swarmed into the cathedral probably for the same reason that the anti-Jewish mob invaded York minster—in order to get hold of and destroy the records of debts and mortgages lodged for safety within the cathedral precincts.

Inside the cathedral the bishop faced this mob, and faced it almost alone ; for his attendants, too frightened to stand by their lord, ran hither and thither to hide themselves from the fierce and turbulent crowd, some actually creeping under the very altars to escape being seen. No mob of disorderly clerks and citizens could frighten the bishop. He whom kings could not intimidate was not the man to give way to a rabble of brawling sacrilegious persons who had dared to invade the sanctuary of the Most High. Sternly the voice of the bishop sounded on the tumult, terrible were the words of excommunication for all who profaned the house of God. In dread silence the crowd listened, and resolution oozed away. Swords were sheathed, weapons no longer raised. The boldest spirits in that mob of rioters felt the curse falling upon them

and desisted. The lust of destruction cooled, the crowd disintegrated. Ashamed by the bishop's speech, convicted of ill-doing, clerks and laymen slunk away.

Lincoln escaped the fearful massacre and outrage of the anti-Jewish outbreak in York ; but a number of houses in the Jewish quarter of the city—from Dernestall and the street called ' Strait ' up Steep Hill, which opens on the High Street to the west of the old Bull Ring, the Jews clustered ; though Aaron of uncounted riches is said to have lived close by the bishop's palace at the corner of Christ's Hospital Terrace—were looted, and after an investigation by the king's officers some eighty citizens were fined for the disturbance.

On the second occasion St Hugh confronted a hostile and aggressive mob it was in south Lincolnshire in the district known as Holland. The bishop had for escort a cousin, William of Avalon. Here the rioters were knights and esquires, and one of these reckless men of war dared to strike at the bishop with his sword. In a trice William of Avalon was down upon this violent ill-conditioned fighting man, had the sword from his hand, and would have slain him on the spot but for the interference of St Hugh who bade his cousin kill no man in such a cause as the bishop's safety. St Hugh desired no blood to be shed in his defence. His weapons were spiritual powers, the censure of the church, the sentence of excommunication that all men dreaded. The swordsman at the worst could but kill the mortal body. What availed the swordsman his thrust, what comfort did the coat of mail afford,

when the sentence of excommunication was pronounced, the sentence that doomed body and soul not only in this world to punishment, but—save repentance and penance intervened—to everlasting punishment in the world to come ?

In the town of Northampton St Hugh had to deal with burgesses exploiting for their own ends an anti-Jewish superstition.

As the story reached the bishop Northampton townsmen had discovered a martyr, slain by the Jews ; at the tomb of this martyr miracles daily took place, and from far and near people were coming to this tomb on pilgrimage, bringing votive offerings. In fact the sepulchre was attracting visitors to the town and was highly profitable. To St Hugh all this was intolerable. There was not a scrap of evidence that the dead man, whose body had been found outside the walls of Northampton, had been killed by Jews or had any title to a martyr's crown. In truth it appeared that the dead body belonged to a thief, a youth named John who had slipped away from Stamford after the attack on the Jews, taking with him a vast amount of plunder, and also a companion. This companion, thinking he might as well possess the whole, had murdered his partner and thrown the corpse outside the walls.

And on this wretched story the burgesses of Northampton had erected a sepulchre, inviting the credulity of the peasants to believe in miracles, come on pilgrimage and spend money in the town ; and making it worse by inflaming the minds of all against the Jews, pretending the murdered thief to have suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Israelites,

Which was the greater scandal, the grossness of the superstition, or the infamy of the lying witness against the Jews? It were hard to say.

St Hugh at once resolved to make short work of the disgraceful and squalid business. Off he went to Northampton, to be met by a multitude of townsmen, highly indignant that their bishop disapproved of Northampton's martyr and the prosperity he was bringing to the town. If the bishop would give but his blessing to the enterprise further miracles might be expected and the shrine become famous throughout all England. Why should not Northampton have its shrine and attract pilgrims?

In vain the crowd blustered, implored and threatened. St Hugh ignored all protests. Straight he went to the tomb of John, the Stamford thief, and with his own hands tore down the votive offerings. Then he told the crowd, that stood by gaping in fear and distress, that it was entirely wrong to pay any sort of reverence and devotion to a dead man of bad character, as this robber of Stamford most undoubtedly was. Instead of being the shrine of a martyr it was the burial-place of a thief murdered by a fellow-thief. Henceforth if any were found to invoke the dead man or pay devotion to him, they would incur the excommunication of the church.

St Hugh spoke and the crowd listened; and listening, they were convinced. The fraud and imposture of 'the martyr of Northampton' were dissolved, the superstition eradicated before it had become deeply rooted. And many in the town, besides Jews, were immensely relieved because the

bishop had made an end of the sorry exhibition of human folly and cupidity perpetrated in their midst.

The cultus of boy-martyrs, alleged to have been slain by Jews, was already spreading in England at the time St Hugh put his foot down on 'the martyr of Northampton.' Little St William of Norwich, little Robert of Bury St Edmunds, and Harold of Gloucester all had their votaries. 'Little St Hugh' of Lincoln was to arrive nearly sixty years after the death of the bishop. In no case were any of these children canonized by the church; nor are their names in any martyrology.

XII

THE JUDGMENTS OF ST HUGH

IN the diocese of Lincoln the bishop was the supreme judge in all ecclesiastical causes. All disputed wills, all matrimonial cases ('probate and divorce'), all questions concerning the guardianship of orphans and the rights of widows, were brought under canon law to the bishop's court for judgment. From that court there was no appeal save to the archbishop of Canterbury and to Rome.

To St Hugh the work of the bishop's court was an uncongenial task, gravely encroaching on the hours of prayer and meditation, a hindrance to the pursuit of the spiritual life.

The aversion from the seat of judgment, which the bishop frequently admitted, was not allowed to justify any neglect of duty. The judicial responsibility was not to be shirked, nor the solemn prerogative of office shuffled off on other shoulders, because there was no personal liking for these things.

On the contrary St Hugh was most careful that the business of his court should be in every way worthily conducted; since that business was the administration of justice—the justice of God. To

that end—the doing of justice—the bishop most earnestly sought to impress on his archdeacons and other assistants chosen to help in the work of the diocesan courts, the grave importance of not delaying their decisions. Fully and patiently let every case be examined and then without any putting off or postponement, let judgment be awarded. The bishop also required that the penalties inflicted on defaulters should be canonical penances and not money fines. He was persuaded that money payments in atonement for wrong-doing encouraged avarice and distorted the justice of the court. The rich man who could afford to pay a fine would probably come off better than the poor man every time.

The bishop's deputy judges argued that nobody minded canonical penances and sentences of excommunication, whereas a heavy fine was a penalty dreaded by all ; was in fact the only sort of punishment that most people could feel. No less a man than the martyred St Thomas of Canterbury had used this system of fines in money for dealing with delinquents.

‘Yes,’ replied St Hugh, ‘but it is because the judges when they impose penance are either too light in their sentences or too careless in seeing the penance carried out, while when it's a case of a money fine they see that it's paid. As to St Thomas of Canterbury I know that he imposed fines in his courts and I venture to disagree with his methods in this respect. Be assured St Thomas was not canonized for imposing fines rather than ecclesiastical penalties. He had other qualities, other titles,

qualities which gained him the martyr's crown, titles that have numbered him with the saints.'

To the bishop the censures of the church were far more terrible than any money fine. Excommunication when the sentence was pronounced by St Hugh stunned the hearers and appalled. The bishop believed that to be cast out of the church was to be cast out of the kingdom of heaven, and that no more dreadful doom could be uttered than the sentence of isolation from God's kingdom. While other bishops and abbots freely excommunicated their enemies with no very serious consequences the bishop of Lincoln's excommunication had the terrifying effect of a judgment of God ; it put the fear of God into the hearts of many ; it brought the unheeding to a miserable end. In more than one instance the person excommunicated fell into mortal sickness or died a violent death.

The curious and lengthy case of the estate of Sir Thomas of Saleby may be quoted in illustration of the fate that overtook evil-doers excommunicated by St Hugh.

In 1194 Sir Thomas was an elderly childless man, and the legal heir to his property was his brother Sir William. The wife of Sir Thomas hated William and hated the prospect of depending upon him for a living when her husband died. Therefore she secretly brought a small child into the house and fobbed off this little girl as her own daughter, and the rightful heiress. The fraud was apparent and Sir William appealed to the bishop who straightway called upon Thomas of Saleby to admit the deceit ; warning him at the same time that excommunication

would follow unless confession and restitution were made. Sir Thomas prevaricated, hummed and hawed and asked to be allowed to consult his wife. The bishop gave him twenty-four hours and no more. He was an old man, Thomas of Saleby, and the fear of his wife was more potent than the fear of God's judgments. Forbidden by his wife to repair the wrong done to his brother Sir Thomas sent no answer to the bishop.

It was Eastertide and St Hugh told the whole story of the fraudulent proceedings to the congregation, pointing out that no good came of property unjustly acquired, rather that a curse rested on the family enriched by stolen goods. Then must Thomas of Saleby, since he would neither confess the guilt nor promise restitution for the hurt done to his brother, be solemnly declared excommunicate. He was excommunicated, and the next night Thomas of Saleby died in his bed.

Hardened but unrepentant the widow then pushed on a marriage between her pretended daughter and a young gentleman named Adam de Neville, who was eager to marry the heiress for the repair of his own fortunes. The girl was barely fourteen, and the bishop coming to hear of the proposed marriage forbade his clergy under heavy penalties for disobedience to solemnize such marriage, forbade also the laity to witness it. Nevertheless Adam de Neville got hold of a priest in a remote village of the diocese and the marriage took place. Bride and bridegroom had vanished when the bishop cited them to appear in his court, and they were excommunicated in their absence. The priest who had

performed the ceremony was suspended from all clerical functions, though whether he erred through ignorance or through malice is not known.

In the king's courts, where the bishop of Lincoln placed the facts of the case, Adam de Neville laid claim to his wife's inheritance. The case was argued ; Adam had persuasive arguments and the bishop of Lincoln was not present. The night before the judges gave sentence in favour of the heiress, Adam, staying at an inn near London, died suddenly in his bed. Fortune hunters bid for the inheritance of the unhappy girl. First one Norman gave king John 200 marks 'for his infant wife and her inheritance,' and dying shortly afterwards, Brien de Insula paid 300 marks for her. Brien was of notoriously bad character and his ruin was anticipated.

The widow of Sir Thomas lived to repent of her ill-doing and confessed to the bishop in the presence of his officials the guilt of her deceit. But it was too late to repair the injustice to Sir William, and though the widow was pardoned, in bitterness of heart and sharp sorrows were her last days spent.

As for a certain forester, excommunicated by the bishop for his violent misdeeds ; unlike Galfrid he did not repent, and by the very men he had done violence to was he murdered.

The case of the unworthy deacon, Richard de Waure, and of his melancholy end is also recorded. Richard was a monk in Lincoln diocese, but when his elder brother died and he fell heir to a considerable property he got permission to return to the world. Soon being in favour with the king and with the chief justice, Richard thought to prove his

devotion to the crown by bringing a trumped-up charge of high treason against a knight named Reginald d'Argentan, who also belonged to Lincoln diocese. It was represented to the bishop that the charge was utterly false, and since the death-penalty is exacted for treason St Hugh stoutly forbade Richard, a clerk in deacon's orders, to proceed with the case. Richard counting on the king's favour and the support of Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury and papal legate, ignored the bishop's order. Thereupon St Hugh suspended the deacon from all religious offices for his disobedience to ecclesiastical authority.

On that Richard went off to archbishop Hubert, who promptly released him from the censures of his diocesan. Full of insolent pride the deacon returned, to force his company on St Hugh while the latter was holding a council with the prelates and nobles of the diocese. Boastfully the deacon explained to all that by the legate's act he was now free of the bishop of Lincoln's jurisdiction and free to prove his loyalty to the king by getting traitors condemned. The ex-monk added that he was glad his bishop's censure, being unauthorized, no longer touched him.

All this talk left the bishop quite unmoved. 'It's no use your crowing to me about the archbishop absolving you,' said St Hugh. 'If you persist in your disobedience I shall excommunicate you on the spot.'

Richard blustered, and threatened in the name of the king what he would do. Submit he would not. And St Hugh excommunicated him.

Once more the froward deacon returned to archbishop Hubert to tell how the bishop of Lincoln by his excommunication had insulted the archbishop and wronged the king. Would the archbishop give him a letter to take to his bishop declaring him, Richard de Waure, absolved from all ecclesiastical censures? Archbishop Hubert could and would oblige Richard de Waure; the letter asked for was written and presented to the bishop. That the archbishop as papal legate could validly absolve the deacon from censures St Hugh did not question. At the same time within his own diocese of Lincoln the bishop had a jurisdiction over disobedient subjects that was not diminished. The ultimate decision no doubt rested with Rome. St Hugh having read and considered the letter said to the deacon: 'The lord archbishop may absolve you a hundred times but in that case I shall repeat my excommunication a hundred times. So long as you persist in your folly and disobedience I shall repeat my excommunication. You know quite well the respect due to your bishop; once for all understand that we repeat and confirm the sentence without any mitigation.'

Sternly spoke the bishop and the deacon withdrew, uneasy in mind, and doubtful if the better policy were not to submit. He was still hesitating and uncertain what to do next when one of his servants in a fit of mad rage killed him with an axe, splitting open the head of Richard de Waure before that recalcitrant man had confessed his fault.

Once at Oxford a husband appealed to the bishop for the restitution of conjugal rights. They were a young couple and the wife, encouraged by her

mother, had left her husband to live with another man. Summoned to the church where the bishop held his court the wife was admonished to return to her husband. But this she vehemently refused to do, declaring loudly that all might hear—and the church was crowded, for so scandalous a case inevitably brought a crowd—that she would rather die than go back. Patiently the bishop pleaded with this erring daughter, finally bringing the young people before him and taking the husband by the hand. ‘Listen, my child,’ said St Hugh. ‘Give your husband the kiss of peace and the blessing of God will go with you. But if you do not obey, then neither you, nor those who so ill advise you, will be spared.’

There was no attempt to investigate the cause of the separation ; no reproaches were uttered. The vows taken in the vocation of holy matrimony were broken and must be mended.

Bidden by the bishop the husband advanced to embrace his wife. Thereupon she spat in his face—to the anger and consternation of all who saw the graceless act.

Solemnly the bishop addressed her : ‘You have rejected the blessing of God and have chosen the curse ; it falls on you.’ He pronounced the dread sentence of excommunication.

The unfaithful wife left the court, unrelenting and unashamed. Her heart was hardened against her husband. Obstinate spurning the counsels of repentance she fell into mortal sickness a few days later, and so died.

In addition to the judicial work imposed on the

bishop St Hugh was frequently called upon to act as delegate for the pope ; for those who appealed to Rome for justice would name him to be their judge. It was not uncommon for appellants to the Holy See to name a judge in England before whom their cases might be heard, and for the pope to delegate the person so named to act on his behalf.

St Hugh groaned and obeyed ; expressing to his intimates what the burden meant : ‘ The only difference between the duties of magistrates and bishops to-day is that the former are performed on appointed days and the latter are unending. The judges in the civil courts have at least some leisure for their private affairs, the judges in the ecclesiastical courts have hardly a moment they can call their own to attend to the salvation of their souls.’

St Hugh was engaged to act as delegate by pope Celestine III and by pope Innocent III.

Pope Celestine appointed the bishop of Lincoln to act on his behalf in the contest between the archbishop of York and his canons. The tempestuous archbishop, Geoffrey the illegitimate son of Henry II, having laid aside his armour to become a priest, was duly elected to the archbishopric in 1190 and consecrated at Tours the following year. His relations with his canons at York were unhappy from the first. The canons complained of neglect of duties to the see, of conduct to themselves that violated ecclesiastical law, of excommunications unjustly hurled at them. They said their diocesan behaved more like a great baron than a shepherd of souls. Various excommunications pronounced by archbishop Geoffrey had on appeal to Rome been

annulled, and St Hugh had been given the task of executing the papal commission in the archdiocese. Then in 1194 pope Celestine commanded St Hugh to take two assessors and make full enquiry into the charges against the archbishop. But before the bishop of Lincoln (with him were the archdeacon of Northampton and the prior of Pontefract) opened his court in the cathedral of York, the archbishop, announcing that he himself had appealed to Rome, vanished from the diocese. All that the bishop of Lincoln could do was to declare that the archbishop must appear in Rome within six months. But the six months elapsed and still archbishop Geoffrey was absent alike from Rome and from York. The canons prayed the bishop of Lincoln to suspend their archbishop, but this he would not do, answering that he would rather be suspended himself in a matter of this sort than suspend another bishop. There were qualities in this exceedingly untractable archbishop Geoffrey, the stormy, impulsive son of Henry of Anjou, that the friend of his father recognized. For all archbishop Geoffrey's impetuous and pugnacious character, so that he had but few friends and fought all comers alone, his life was singularly unstained by the sins of the flesh. This most unclerical of clerks lived temperately and chastely—on the witness of friends and foes.

Archbishop Geoffrey delayed his appeals and his presence at Rome, and even the pope at last declared him suspended, committing to the bishop of Lincoln the promulgation of the sentence. But before this was done Geoffrey made his submission and was released from the papal censures. Resistance to the

demands and exactions, first of Richard I and then of John, ended in Geoffrey's expulsion from England and death in exile.

Again St Hugh was appointed to act for the papal see in the case of the monks of Coventry versus Hugh de Nonant, bishop of Coventry. This Hugh de Nonant, a prelate of the courts of kings, more skilled in diplomacy and the business of the state than in the worship of the King of kings, once openly boasted to Richard I that if he had his way not a monk should be left in England. It was this same bishop of Coventry who fretted on one occasion because St Hugh insisted that the Mass must be sung festively and not hurried over, the day being a feast. In vain Hugh de Nonant protested they were due at the king's council and the king must not be kept waiting. 'That can't be helped,' said St Hugh. 'No temporal duty dispenses us from our duty to God.' As it happened, although St Hugh did not arrive at the council chamber till long after all the other members were assembled, no business had been started and nobody had been kept waiting.

The issue between the monks of Coventry and the bishop was simple enough. Hugh de Nonant, in his dislike of monasticism and with his prejudice against the regular clergy, had driven out the monks who composed the chapter at Coventry and brought in secular canons in their place. The monks of course appealed to Rome and in due season obtained judgment in their favour. Pope Celestine III ordered the decree to be enforced and named the bishop of Lincoln, with archbishop Hubert and abbot Sampson of Bury St Edmunds, to see to it.

The long struggle between the bishop of Coventry and his monks ended in 1197. Shortly after Hugh de Nonant resigned his see, and from being the hater of monks, sought to make amends for his past life by entering the abbey of Bec in Normandy. There he was received into the very monastic life he had so long despised, dying in peace with God in 1198.

St Hugh was also required to act as papal delegate in the prolonged disputes between the archbishops of Canterbury, first Baldwin and then Hubert, and the monastic chapter. Archbishop Baldwin before he went on crusade and died in the Holy Land had his quarrels with the prior and the monks of the cathedral at Canterbury, and the friction was renewed when Hubert became archbishop. The chapter, always jealous of any move on the archbishop's part that might curtail their rights, objected to Baldwin's building a church at Hackington that appeared to encroach on the ancient privileges of Canterbury, and the pope siding with the monks, the Hackington church was pulled down. Archbishop Hubert wanted a church of his own at Lambeth, and as this, the monks decided, would sooner or later supersede Canterbury, the right of electing the archbishop would be lost. So again they appealed to Rome and again the pope pronounced in their favour, though St Hugh with the rest of the bishops asked the pope to reconsider his decision. 'God is our witness,' wrote Innocent III to archbishop Hubert, 'that we cannot give a verdict in your favour without grievously offending God, our creator.'

St Hugh, with the bishop of Ely and abbot

Sampson as assessors, was named by the pope to act on the award to the monks of Canterbury, and, Hubert yielding, the Lambeth church suffered the fate of Hackington. But many points were still unsettled. In May 1199 a long letter from Innocent III to the bishops of Lincoln and Ely and the abbot of Bury St Edmunds, urged the pope's delegates in this dispute between the archbishop and the Canterbury monks 'before all else to labour to induce the parties to come to an agreement among themselves.'

St Hugh was a dying man when at last this agreement was accomplished and the papal decision fully carried out.

There were other cases, besides the disputes of bishops and chapters, when St Hugh was called upon to render justice as the pope's representative. The overweening pride of rich men provoked the cry for help that was not to be disregarded, both in the case of William the priest and in that of the orphans defrauded of their inheritance.

William, duly instituted to a benefice in the diocese of York, was forcibly driven out by the friends of the lord of the manor who desired the rectory for his brother. William appealing to the pope for justice, the bishop of Lincoln was given authority to deal with the case, and promptly ordered the intruding rector to depart. The order not being obeyed, sentence of excommunication was pronounced against this contumacious clerk and against all who aided and abetted him in wrongdoing. In the end William was reinstated ; for one by one the conspirators fell into terrible misfortune ;

some went mad, others fell into blindness, or came to violent deaths.

Jordan de Turri, a man of means in the city of London, and of some importance in public life, was accused by two orphans of defrauding them of their estate, and the bishop of Lincoln was named by the pope to judge the cause. Jordan de Turri, summoned to appear and answer the charge, did appear on the day named by St Hugh and came accompanied by a crowd of other important and influential persons. The members of this swell mob shouted out in court that the bishop had better not go on with the case, that they would get king Richard to take vengeance unless it was dropped, that the city of Lincoln should be made to pay for it if the bishop did not stop it. The bishop's assessors grew alarmed at the hostile demonstration and whispered that it were best to yield. The bishop hardly noticed the whisperers; for a few minutes he kept silence while he prayed to the Father of all orphans for guidance. Then turning to Jordan de Turri he quietly addressed him: 'Jordan, I have a great regard for you, but I cannot let my affection place your interests before the justice of God. I know that these two orphans cannot win in a struggle with you, against you and your powerful friends none of us on this bench can hope to win. But one thing I can do, and I am speaking for myself alone that my conscience may be clear, I can write to our sovereign lord the pope and tell him that in all this realm of England there is but one man who disputes his jurisdiction and defies his authority and that man is Jordan de Turri.'

Jordan, capitulating before the letter was written, for he wanted to stand well at Rome as he stood well in England, made full restitution to the orphans, the bishop of Lincoln holding him fast to his obligations.

These are but two of the many cases brought for judgment before St Hugh as the pope's delegate.

XIII

THE BISHOP'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

HEAVILY the responsibilities of office bore upon him ; and the cares and anxieties of his bishopric were at times so oppressive that more than once St Hugh begged the pope to let him return to the peace of the Carthusian cloister—to resign his see as other Carthusian bishops had been allowed to do*—but the spiritual life never flagged. The Carthusian training and discipline prevailed. Modified the rule must be ; the spirit of the sons of St Bruno was unquenched in the years when Hugh was bishop of Lincoln. There was no internal relaxation in the crowded hours. In his spare diet—which required total abstinence from flesh-meat—the only concession was an additional ration of fish. To others the bishop's hospitality supplied a generous table at all times. The hair shirt was retained, the white habit of the order was worn save when occasion demanded the official and ceremonial vestments. The bishop clung with devotion to the daily singing of the divine office, and whenever it was possible

* The request, always refused, was not repeated after Innocent III snubbed the bishop's messengers and thereby made it plain to St Hugh that he was asking for something not to be granted.

would at the canonical hour leave off whatever he was doing to recite the praises of God. At his meals he would in the ordinary way be read aloud to, either from holy scripture or the lives of the saints, or the writings of the fathers. Daily the bishop read a portion of the Gospels, and he managed to arrange his readings so that every year the whole of the Bible was completed.

But the retreat which, unless grave causes prevented, St Hugh made annually and in some years twice, at Witham priory was the great source of consolation. At Witham the fount of the spiritual life was replenished, the soul strengthened and renewed. To certain of his contemporaries this retirement of the bishop of Lincoln to the solitude of Witham was inexplicable, and therefore judged waste of time. What good did it do, they asked, this leaving the diocese, and retiring to the wilds? They disapproved, the worldlings, of a bishop, otherwise in so many respects admirable, who was content to depart, to vanish from the haunts of men, and give himself to the contemplative life. The courts of kings and the houses of the great could be visited profitably; in such quarters the bishop could use his influence. But what did this contemplative life amount to? The goodness of St Hugh was apparent. What need had he then for retirement and retreat? When his presence was wanted he was not to be found, because forsooth the bishop was in Somerset!

What these critics could not be made to understand was that all who would fulfil the will of God must from time to time retire into a desert place. The needs of the soul are imperative. In the rush

and hurry of that twelfth century it was as necessary to go into retreat as at any other time of the world's history. St Hugh knew this ; knew well that unless official duties were laid aside for a season, and the tension relaxed, his strength would be dissipated, his judgments become uncertain, his powers enfeebled. The practice of the presence of God was the secret of his power, and to maintain that practice he must seek Mount Tabor and find Jesus only.

So every autumn as the years sped St Hugh departed to the Carthusian priory at Witham in Somerset and there he would remain a month and sometimes longer, to return to the work of his diocese filled with life more abundant and with wisdom illuminated from on high.

Back at Witham the bishop would resume the old Carthusian life he loved and take up the daily round of duties ; not as a bishop but as a plain monk. He would in no respect live differently from the brethren ; his cell was as other cells and no chaplain or attendant waited upon him ; he would do his share of the domestic work and take his turn with the rest of the community at washing up the plates and dishes. Every morning St Hugh said Mass, every week he went to confession in that time of retreat.

Dom Bovo, who at the Grande Chartreuse had strongly urged that St Hugh should go to England when Henry asked for him, was now prior at Witham and under his rule the Carthusian fervour and observance flourished, bringing peace and healing to the soul of all who visited the priory. To St Hugh the month at Witham was the complete and perfect

holiday. He enjoyed every hour of it and went back to work refreshed no less in body than in mind and spirit.

It was not all silence and solitude during that month at Witham. In the hours of recreation the monks would come to St Hugh for stories of the holy men of his native land, for reminiscences of his years at the Grande Chartreuse. Visitors, too, would break in upon him, and St Hugh would turn from his meditations to become a genial companion, whose talk charmed the hearts of kings and scholars, and made him beloved by peasants and little children.

St Hugh could talk ; he could also listen—which is often harder. At the priory there was an old friend dom Adam, who had left the Premonstratensian abbey at Dryburgh, where he was abbot, to become a Carthusian. To dom Adam often would St Hugh turn for advice and never in vain. Dom Adam was always waging war against the complacency and self-satisfaction that is apt to intrude whenever men and women strive to live the good life, whether in religion or in the world.

Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, was not apparently the victim of self-complacency, but with dom Adam this deadly and most repulsive vice was an insidious growth paralysing and blinding, and a word of warning was always in season. Therefore in their confidential talks Adam would speak plainly and put his friend on guard against the malignant foe.

‘ I am sure there are many who look up to you as a saintly bishop, and a great and good bishop,’ he

would say ; ‘ but, after all, what I want to know is what have you really done that is worthy of a shepherd of souls ? How do you use the talents God has given you ? Can you say that there is any comparison, for instance, between your work and that of the holy apostles, who dared all dangers to found the church and gave their blood for Christ ? ’

St Hugh took the admonition in good part. It was all too true, he admitted ; the little he had done was as nothing to what remained to be done. So far from being cast down or depressed by the reminder of his shortcomings the bishop was spurred on by dom Adam to greater effort.

It was St Hugh's own talk of the old days at the Grande Chartreuse that made the lay-brother Ainard desire passionately to return there before he died. He was now well over a hundred, but age had not chilled his heart and his vigour was amazing. Permission to return to the Grande Chartreuse could not be granted, but the call was irresistible. The fever of home-sickness fell on brother Ainard, the longing for the mountains and the familiar sights and sounds of bygone years could not be quieted. One day, after a final refusal to his request to leave, without saying a word the indomitable old boy took his staff and with no other luggage started off for the Grande Chartreuse. Word was brought to St Hugh who immediately went in pursuit. Brother Ainard had got as far as a wood in the neighbourhood before St Hugh overtook him.

‘ God forgive you for this, my dear brother,’ said the bishop ; ‘ but how came you to set off without me ? Haven't I always looked up to you as a father ?

And now you go away and leave me alone in a strange land? Ah, I know your heart's desire. You long to end your days with those dear hermits at the Grande Chartreuse. Very well; and so do I, and we'll go together.'

Then the bishop took off his pastoral ring—the only token of episcopal office he wore at Witham—and handed it to his attendants. 'Take this at once,' he said, 'to our good lords, the canons of Lincoln. Bid them choose another bishop in my place for I am returning to the solitude I love. The time has come when I must be done with all the cares and anxieties of the world, for I have suffered from them too long.'

It was a bold move, a daring challenge, but St Hugh knew his man and could think of no other device for diverting brother Ainard from his impossible enterprise. St Hugh staked all on brother Ainard yielding, and won.

Brother Ainard, indeed, was utterly overthrown by the bishop's words, while the attendants broke out into remonstrance and protests. To Ainard the thought of the bishop throwing up his charge brought a shock. It would be nothing less than a calamity if dom Hugh resigned. On his knees at the bishop's feet the old man implored St Hugh not to forsake his flock, pleading that no true shepherd would abandon his sheep. Unmoved stood St Hugh until at last brother Ainard, with his arms round the bishop's knees, exclaimed: 'Never while a spark of life is in this old body of mine will I agree to your deserting your post. Rather than such a dreadful thing should happen I will stay in this strange land

and die in it. Let each of us go back to his own duties. After all we must beware in seeking our own welfare that we do not forget the welfare of Christ's kingdom.'

Thus was the stratagem of the bishop entirely successful. St Hugh and brother Ainard bound themselves by a compact. The bishop would not leave Lincoln, the lay-brother would remain at Witham. Joyously they returned to the priory; St Hugh happy in the recovery of the indefatigable lay-brother, Ainard highly pleased that he had prevailed on the bishop not to leave his diocese. At St Hugh's mediation brother Ainard was this time excused the penances the disobedience of his unauthorized departure had earned. The old man outlived St Hugh and when he died in peace at Witham in 1204 was said to be one hundred and thirty years of age. But dom Bovo was allowed to return to the Grande Chartreuse after St Hugh's death, when dom Robert became prior.

Pursuing ardently the spiritual life St Hugh was constrained to appeal to archbishop Hubert for a reform of the morals of the clergy, knowing full well that the laxity of the shepherd is of mortal hurt to the sheep. Specially was St Hugh moved to take action after the vision that came to Adam, a young cleric, when the bishop was saying Mass at Buckden in November about the year 1194.

This young cleric was praying on All Souls' Day before the altar of Our Lady, reciting the psalter for the faithful departed and thinking of his father, a pilgrim to the Holy Land, but a few years dead. Pouring out his very soul to God while he knelt in

prayer a voice from the altar bade him rise and go forthwith to the bishop of Lincoln. 'Tell him, from God,' came the words, 'that he must with urgency make plain to the archbishop of Canterbury the grievous state of the clergy in this land. Reform is required, for the Divine Majesty is deeply wounded by abuses beyond number. Carnal offences abound and on all sides is simony. By the vices of the shepherd is the flock contaminated ; rich and poor, great and small, are alike infected and soon will the wrath of God descend upon the people of this realm. The guilty must be punished if the doom is to be averted.'

Fearful and trembling the young cleric asked himself in perplexity and in vain whence came the voice and at length deciding that it must have been his own imagination he resumed his psalter. Hardly had he signed himself with the sign of the cross and said but a few verses of the psalm than again the same words fell on his ears. Then it occurred to the young man that perhaps behind the altar some council was being held and that he had mistakenly intruded. He got up to leave the church and at the door was stopped by a pious woman who was continually at prayer in that church. 'God has spoken to you twice,' said the woman. 'He has given you a command. What that command is I do not know, but I am quite sure God has spoken to you.'

The young man, greatly troubled, remained fasting and at prayer till evening. At night when he laid down to sleep the voice again addressed him. 'My son, it is to you who are now about to sleep, I

‘ speak. Go as soon as possible to the good bishop of Lincoln and tell him the words you have twice received from me.’

‘ How should so great and so distinguished a man listen to me ? ’ the young cleric demurred. ‘ I am so young, so inexperienced hardly I dare speak to him.’

‘ He will at once believe you,’ the voice replied, ‘ if you tell him what is visible to you upon the altar when he says Mass on the first day you are present. Tell him what you see and the truth of your message will be confirmed. No longer hesitate, but hasten to do as you have been bidden.’

The young man promised to obey, and after a few hours’ sleep was up before daybreak and on his way to the manor of Buckden where the bishop was staying.

When he arrived the bishop had not yet begun Mass and a large number of clergy filled the chancel. There were vestments to be blessed which a party of monks had brought ; also a chalice of the finest workmanship. This chalice delighted the bishop, though he reflected sadly how many priests there were who spent all their revenues upon themselves and had no money left for the glory of the things of the altar.

Presently the bishop began his Mass and closely and with deep devotion the youthful cleric followed it. Just before the consecration of the sacred Host he saw in the bishop’s hands a figure of the divine Child, very small, but of astounding beauty. Tears filled his eyes at the sight of God thus manifesting his very presence in the holy mysteries. After the

consecration, when the Host is broken before communion, again he saw the vision of the Christ child resting in the bishop's hands.

Directly Mass was over the young cleric, undismayed by the crowd of assistant clergy, approached the bishop and begged for an interview. St Hugh led him behind the altar and there told him to speak freely and confidently. And the young man told St Hugh of all that had been declared to him and of the vision of the Divine Child at Mass. 'Twice in your hands, your holiness,* I saw our Lord Jesus Christ lifted up in the figure of a little Child. And you must have seen it, too, and far more perfectly, because you were so close to our Lord and so much more worthy to see Him.'

For a while the bishop wept, but the tears were not for sorrow. Then after taking the youth in his arms he told him to say nothing of what he had seen to others; further, since God had shown him such favours it were well that he should avoid the world and its perils and become a monk. At the meal which followed the bishop had the young man to sit next to him in the refectory and on the morrow sent him away with his blessing. So Adam the young cleric departed to become a Benedictine monk of the abbey at Eynsham, its sub-prior and eventually its abbot. (He returned to the bishop of Lincoln as chaplain a few years after this first interview, and was the author of the life of St Hugh, the *Magna Vita*.)

* The term 'your holiness' was still in the twelfth century applied to bishops and abbots, and not confined strictly as at present to the Pope.

The bishop now wrote to archbishop Hubert imploring him to take action for the reform of the morals of the clergy, beseeching him for the love of God to be less absorbed in the high politics of state and more attentive to the crying needs of his diocese and the whole church in England.

Archbishop Hubert did not take the advice at all kindly. For Hubert Walter, brought up and trained in the service of the crown, was justiciar of the realm as well as archbishop of Canterbury (and papal legate in addition in 1195). For four years while Richard I was absent (1194-98) Hubert Walter was the chief ruler in England, and of necessity his abilities were directed to raising money for the king. In the end pope Innocent III insisted on the archbishop resigning the justiciarship. Hubert Walter, a civil servant rather than a statesman, belonged to the company of political ecclesiastics; he was always at war with his chapter, the monks of Canterbury, and the sanctity of Hugh of Lincoln was something outside his experience. Yet archbishop Hubert fell under the spell of the Carthusian life when he visited Witham priory, and talked with St Hugh's old friend dom Adam, and heard a sermon from that venerable monk. So moved was the archbishop that after the sermon he went to confession to dom Adam, received from him the discipline and begged for a commentary from him on the Lord's Prayer.¹⁶

All this was after St Hugh was dead. While St Hugh lived archbishop Hubert was taken up with public affairs to the neglect of the health of the church,

Firmly as St Hugh held aloof from the factions and the political strife of the ten years when Richard Cœur de Lion was king, he could not entirely escape contact with the distracting issues of the day, nor be free of the splashes of personal rivalries. The sway and swirl of the contest for power touched him but left no stain. As he had been involved in the troubles of archbishop Geoffrey, so was the bishop of Lincoln dragged into the disputes that raged round William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, papal legate, chancellor and justiciar in the first years of Richard I. Longchamp was as supreme in his day as was Hubert Walter in the later period and he strove as Hubert did to raise money for the king.

Prince John was against him, and so generally were the bishops and the barons ; and the politics are entangled beyond extrication. Longchamp seems to have counted the bishop of Lincoln on his side—he certainly respected and admired him—for when he appealed to pope Celestine III against his enemies, and the pope pronounced the persecutors of the papal legate to be excommunicate, it was upon St Hugh that Longchamp called to see the pope's instructions were duly fulfilled. On the other hand St Hugh realized this excommunication was inappropriate, and was present at the council when Longchamp was deposed. Excommunications were hurled at Longchamp by the bishops, and Longchamp in exile in France flung back excommunications in return. It was impossible to execute the papal excommunication ; this fact was plain to the bishop of Lincoln and the pope did not press the matter,

With the king absent, bishops in fierce political rivalry, prince John for ever intriguing against the crown ; with parish priests living in concubinage, and murder rife in the land, bishop Hugh of Lincoln went on his way ; healing the sick, confirming little children, encouraging and admonishing his clergy, conscious always of the close presence of God and of the justice of the kingdom of God.

His duty brought the bishop into conflict with king Richard I.

XIV

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE Carthusian character veiled in the cloister from the eyes of the world shone with resplendent fulness in the bishop of Lincoln. Even then much that St Hugh did was done in secret ; not to be revealed till his Life was written ; many of his miracles of healing were only to be advertised after his death, when the time came for Hugh of Lincoln to be declared a saint.

The tenderness the bishop had for lepers, the love he lavished on these stricken outcasts belonged to the Carthusian tradition. In boyhood St Hugh, taught by his mother, grew in the knowledge that a great debt was owing to all whom leprosy afflicted. At Lincoln the leper hospital of the Holy Innocents stood to the south of the city, and this house was always very dear to the heart of St Hugh. Often would he visit it and there speak words of hope and consolation, taking with him certain of his clergy, chosen companions in the works of mercy. Disinherited in this world there yet remained to the leper the eternal inheritance—that was the substance of the bishop's message to the mortally wounded. What else could be said ?

Privately, without it being known to the bishop's servants and attendants, the bishop found opportunities for bringing parties of lepers to his rooms ; there he would wash their feet, kiss them devoutly, and after providing an ample meal send them away with a present of money. Once when William of Leicester, chancellor of the diocese, mentioned to St Hugh that St Martin of Tours seemed to do more than this, for he healed the lepers by his touch when he kissed them, the bishop answered : ' St Martin healed the body by his touch, it is my soul the leper heals with his kiss.'

The charity of St Hugh was not confined to the living ; no less faithfully he served the friendless dead. He would have the dead honoured, for all souls were God's ; and God with a father's love sent His angels at the hour of death to bear the soul away to its creator while His ministers had the care of committing the lifeless body to the earth with Christian burial. The soul had need of comfort, said St Hugh, great need when it was cast out of the body ; and much was to be made of the dead. The Holy Eucharist was to be offered and the empty house of clay returned with blessing to the mother earth whence it came ; until at the last day renewed with unfading youth it should become once more the habitation of the glorious spirit that gave it life. His words recall a passage from St John Chrysostom on the body of the resurrection : ' God being about to rebuild your house removes the inhabitant while the demolition takes place, that you may not be incommoded by the dust and disorder ; and then when the new edifice is ready to receive you, you shall return.'

Neglect of the departed, the perfunctory reading of the burial service, and indeed all carelessness displayed to the body or soul of the dead, the bishop of Lincoln rebuked by his charity. He made it a rule to officiate or assist at all funerals in his neighbourhood, and required the clergy throughout his diocese to let him know if any burials were to take place in the district he happened to be visiting. It was a mark of affection and respect to a good man, said St Hugh, to give honourable burial ; and if the life had not been good, why then the poor soul had the greater need of prayers. Nothing was allowed to come between the bishop and his obligation to the dead. Were the mourners too poor to pay for the funeral tapers or other customary expenses the bishop found money for everything. On his many journeys from the Humber to the Thames on meeting a funeral procession he would dismount from his horse and at the graveside either join with the priest in reciting the psalms or else take the service himself, dismissing the mourners with his blessing and resuming his journey when the service was over.

No matter where he was, with whom he was to dine, or how many his own guests might be, St Hugh always gave precedence to funerals. One day when St Hugh had promised to dine with Henry II he found quite a number of funerals fixed for the same day and must needs attend them. Hungry and impatient the king sent servants to remind the bishop of the dinner hour already passed. It was no use. Quietly and gravely St Hugh proceeded with the service, merely leaving off to tell the royal servants, ' There is no need for the king to wait for me ; for

heaven's sake let his majesty sit down and in the name of the Lord get on with his dinner.' To some of his clergy, who could not at all understand this way of treating kings, St Hugh explained afterwards that it were better though invited to a royal banquet to let an earthly king dine alone than to ignore the invitation of the King of kings.

At another time, on the day after Christmas Day, the bishop had promised to dine with the archdeacon of Bedford and a large number of clergy. No sooner had he finished his Mass in honour of St Stephen than a stone-mason engaged on the cathedral came to him and begged that as his brother had died the day before the bishop would give him the pontifical absolution and say a prayer for his soul. This the bishop at once promised he would do. But was the poor man buried? asked the bishop. If not, when was the funeral to take place? The stone-mason answered that the body was in the church and named a distant parish. Immediately the bishop had horses saddled and set off with chaplains and servants on the long journey to take the funeral. With all his accustomed reverence and devotion the bishop conducted the funeral rites, and then the news having spread that the bishop was present, people arrived from other places hard by to tell the bishop of bodies waiting for burial. In the end it is said that five funerals were conducted by St Hugh on that feast of Stephen; while the archdeacon and his clergy waited for dinner. Even the relatives of the dead at last besought the bishop to be content with giving the pontifical blessing and commending the soul of the

departed to the mercy of God. St Hugh would have none of it. Had not Christ said : *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me ?* To bring comfort to the mourners and to honour the dead who died in the Lord, was just cause, the bishop decided, for neglecting dinner ; and sufficient apology for the disappointment of archdeacons.

St Hugh at a later time was in London in order to attend a council of prelates and nobles. An abbot—identified as abbot of Pershore—died before the council opened and his body waited burial at St Saviour's, Southwark. To the distress of St Hugh not one of the prelates who had come to London—some of them knew well the late abbot, who was a stranger to St Hugh—would miss the opening of the council to go to the abbot's funeral. ' God forbid,' said the bishop of Lincoln, ' that the lord abbot should be forsaken by all the prelates who are here in this great city. We cannot treat one of our brethren in this way, for not one of us would like to be so treated himself.'

Off went St Hugh and alone, and because it was summer time and the corpse was far decomposed—for the abbot had died of a painful malady—the attendants could hardly bear to approach the coffin. The bishop, however, neither noticed the odour nor thought of infection. He walked round the grave, it was said, ' as a mother walks round and round the cradle of her sleeping babe.' And when on his return to his quarters friends timidly enquired if he were quite well, the bishop was puzzled. He thought they must be mistaken in supposing there was any unpleasant smell or danger of infection at the

funeral. Yet at other times it was a commonplace that the bishop of Lincoln's sense of smell was exceptionally acute.

The death of good brother Morinus, of the Order of Knights Templar, the bishop's almoner, was revealed to St Hugh in a dream when he was at Sleaford. He saw plainly the cell of brother Morinus in the bishop's manor house at Stow—it was there Morinus had fallen mortally sick, and St Hugh after administering the last sacraments had been obliged to leave him to press on to Sleaford—and in his dream a white dove kept flying from side to side of the room trying to find a way out. On awaking St Hugh knew that Morinus was dead. Since he also knew that the dead man would be taken to Bruer where the Templars had a house, the bishop ordered his horses to be got ready. He was saying his office when the messenger brought word of the almoner's death, and arrived at Bruer in time to take the funeral.

All the current superstitions were repugnant to the plain good sense of the bishop of Lincoln. He particularly disliked the practice of laying a ghost by disinterring the dead man whose apparition was seen and burning the body. To St Hugh this was entirely wrong, for it showed a deplorable want of respect for the mortal remains of the Christian dead. It happened that near Buckingham there was an orgy of fearful excitement concerning a man recently dead whose ghost kept on appearing night after night in horrible shape, first to the widow, then to other relatives and friends. Finally the neighbours also declared they saw this frightful spirit. In fact

the ghost scared the whole district. Stephen, the archdeacon of Buckingham, being in that part was appealed to for help ; he in his turn applied to the bishop, who was in London, asking what was to be done. Should the body, as many proposed, be disinterred and burnt ?

St Hugh had no experience in laying ghosts, but a pious custom still lingered in the twelfth century of placing either within or without the coffin of the dead a written form of absolution, for the assurance that the soul was released from all censures of the church. Such post-mortem absolutions were given even when the dead had departed penitent and pardoned. St Hugh forbidding cremation, advised the archdeacon to have the grave of the Buckingham man opened and to lay a writing upon the corpse proclaiming the pardon of this perturbed spirit. St Hugh himself wrote the words of absolution and the archdeacon saw the instructions were carried out. After this was done the Buckingham ghost walked no more. The crowd present at the opening of the coffin found no sign of decay in the corpse. Being convinced that the body did not decay while it remained under censure of the church—unless, on the other hand, it was the body of a saint—and was therefore peculiarly liable in that state to be occupied by the devil for the intimidation of the living (which was the reason why resort was had to burning, since it gave the devil no room to disport), all were satisfied that the dead man dying unrepentant was now pardoned. Not that, as it appeared, the deceased had died in mortal sin or without absolution. But how account for the horrid shape of the

ghost, and the condition of the corpse if the man had not died in sin ? Anyway it was everywhere believed that a piece of writing by the bishop of Lincoln containing words of pardon brought peace to the troubled—and troubling—spirit.¹⁷

Who can declare exactly the laws that govern our relations with the dead ? Who can affix limits to the influence of the living on the dead, of the dead on the living ?

As the common sense of St Hugh revolted against the superstitions of his day, so his clear mind detected and exposed all forms of cant. When men of the world prated of the beauty of the Carthusian life, calling it an angelic life with its freedom from the temptations which they were daily compelled to encounter, lapsing into the sentimental over the obstacles to religion which they had to face, St Hugh knew the talk was unreal. These courtiers who languished over the peace and happiness of the monastic life were the last men on earth to desire vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. They must serve God in other callings. St Hugh replied to the fanciful speeches with a reminder that the kingdom of heaven was not reserved for monks and hermits. ‘ At the judgment day none of us will be condemned because we have not been monks or solitaries but because we have not been true Christians. And for a true Christian three things are necessary, and if one of these things is lacking in us we shall be judged, and judged the more severely for our profession of religion. Charity in the heart, truth on the lips, and the body unsullied by impurity are the three marks of the Christian life. Nor is any one of us worthy to

be called a Christian who has not charity, truth and purity. . . .’

Sighing for the peace of the cloister, sentimental talk of the loveliness of the religious life were altogether irrelevant. Charity, truth and purity were what mattered ; over and over again did St Hugh discourse to that effect.

The shyness and timidity that made him in his youth fear the company of women were gone in the years of Lincoln. The bishop would often invite devout women and holy widows to sit next to him at dinner. He would lay his hands, which were always kept scrupulously clean, on their heads and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads. At times the bishop, now an elderly man, did not hesitate to clasp them in his arms before he dismissed them in peace with his blessing, commending them to God and instructing them to walk in the footsteps of the holy women of old.

Demonstrations of affection and regard, frowned upon in later ages, were not unusual at that time. Freely did men kiss one another with the kiss of peace, freely and without thought of evil did the holiest of men and women embrace. St Hugh held women in particular honour because Christ was born of a woman. He was fond of reminding the women who listened to him that the privilege given to Mary they all shared. ‘No man could say that a man was the father of God, but Mary was in truth the mother of God.’ That was the conclusion of St Hugh’s speech.

For all his high respect, or perhaps because of it, the bishop would not tolerate the honour paid to

Rosamund Clifford, 'fair Rosamund,' the mistress of Henry II. It shocked him when he visited the convent of Godstow, near Oxford, where Rosamund was buried, to find her tomb in the chancel of the convent church with lamps and candles continually burning before it. King Henry had endowed the nuns of Godstow with money and given them many privileges. Walter de Clifford—Rosamund's father—left property to the convent. The bishop was scandalized at Godstow by this splendid tomb and said so. He insisted that the coffin must be removed outside the church and buried in the common graveyard that others should learn to live chastely. 'All this honour to a king's mistress dishonoured religion.'

So the body of Rosamund Clifford was cast out of the chancel at Godstow church by the nuns and buried in the churchyard ; where the punning epitaph might long be read :

*Hic jacet in tumulo Rosa mundi non Rosa munda ;
Non redolet sed olet quae redolere solet.*

When not constrained by company and free to enjoy the silence he loved the bishop retired within the sanctuary of his soul and would not be disturbed. The practice of recollection was resumed directly the pressure of external things was relaxed and then the world with its visible phenomena ceased to exist for him. The bishop dwelt with God and held distractions at bay when duties were laid aside. It was the old Carthusian habit ; just as in the days of his procuratorship at the Grande Chartreuse dom Hugh had laid aside all cares of office with his cloak when he entered the choir for the divine office.

The long journeys on horseback were opportunities for meditation not to be missed. Common objects of the country, fauna and flora of medieval England were left unnoticed ; the bishop was wrapt in contemplation. Some one always had to ride in front, otherwise the bishop's horse unguided would never have taken the right road. As it was, it sometimes happened that another traveller would come between the bishop and his leader and the bishop's horse would follow the route of the stranger—the bishop being quite unaware that he was off the road. Then the bishop's guide, presently turning round and finding the bishop no longer following, would gallop in pursuit, calling out to the rest of the cavalcade : ' Mercy on us ! They have stolen my bishop again.'

Overtaking the bishop the man would find him deep in mental prayer, unconscious of the vagaries of his horse.

At his manor house in the country the bishop never had time for a stroll or a country walk. When prayer, reading and diocesan business were over it was time to go to bed.

He won afresh in Lincolnshire the affection of birds, and reciprocated the attentions of these creatures of God. At Thornholm a number of tit-mice or tom-tits fearlessly associated with the bishop whenever he visited that manor. At Stow Park, which stood about nine miles to the north-west of Lincoln, lived St Hugh's famous swan.

Stow Park was always a favourite residence with St Hugh, and the swan, which was far larger than any other swan in the neighbourhood, arrived on

the scene at the time of St Hugh's enthronement. Its first act was to get rid of all other inhabitants by driving them off the lake.

Before the bishop came to Stow Park the swan was exceedingly ferocious ; but it allowed without protest its capture when the people decided to present it to the bishop. No sooner was the bird in St Hugh's presence than it ate bread from his hand with great satisfaction ; afterwards it proceeded to make the house its home and became the bishop's inseparable companion. Only when the bishop left Stow did the swan return to the lake, and back on the water would suffer no acquaintance to approach except the bailiff who brought it food. Always a day or two before the bishop returned the swan would be at the house awaiting him ; and always it was very jealous of the bishop's companions. Constituting itself the bishop's sentinel, guarding him when asleep, threatening all who came near with its beak and wings, the swan was a considerable embarrassment to the bishop's chaplain. It was no use trying to coax the swan or to frighten it ; for the result was either a threat of attack or a hideous cry that would waken the bishop. No one, not even the bailiff who fed him in the bishop's absence, was recognized as a friend when St Hugh was present. The swan would brook no interlopers ; all who intruded on the bishop were the swan's enemies and could only be tolerated when the bishop ordered it.

Long absence brought no forgetfulness to the swan ; it rather increased the signs of joy when the bishop did return. When after being kept away from Stow for two years St Hugh reappeared the

swan's excited delight surpassed all previous demonstrations. The date of the bishop's return was not known to the people of Stow Park and his arrival was unexpected, but the noise of the swan told all within hearing of the bishop's approach. When the bishop's voice was heard the cry of the swan and its outspread wings announced to all the bird's high pleasure and satisfaction. Into the house went the swan with the bishop and there it stayed, daily taking its portion of bread, cut up into a finger's length, from the bishop's hand, until once more the time came for the bishop to depart.

For nearly fifteen years this friendship lasted. Then one Eastertide when St Hugh came to Stow Park for rest the swan for the first time made no sign of recognition, neither did it rush to meet the bishop, but stayed in the middle of the lake. Three days passed and the swan consented to be caught and brought to the house ; only to stand listless and dejected before the bishop as though bowed down with sorrow. That was St Hugh's last visit to Stow—death came to him six months later—and thus the swan took farewell of his friend.

For some years the swan outlived the bishop, but it made no more friends. It survived in art, for sculptors and painters were wont to represent St Hugh in company with his swan of Stow.

Of St Hugh's table-talk it is noted that he had a disrelish from the too positive statement in matters of fact, and the inaccuracies of speech that abounded, and was apt to qualify both the spoken—and no less the written—word with an 'if we remember correctly,' though in his day no man had a more

accurate memory or a greater aversion from loose phrasing or vague generalities.

To check the bad language in vogue, and rebuke the popular oaths, in especial of the profane expletive 'by the holy cross' (*per sanctum crucem*), St Hugh invented the ridiculous oath 'by the holy nut' (*per sanctam nucem*). When in his company men talked in melancholy fashion of their departed youth, '*Per sanctam nucem*,' said St Hugh, 'it would be a bad thing for us all if we had to live for ever.'

He deprecated enthusiasm over miracles—though he performed many—for it seemed to St Hugh that the occurrence of such wonders was neither to be greatly marvelled at nor striven after. He would relate with obvious pleasure the miraculous good deeds of the holy—for the incidents added to the glory of the saints who did the miracles, and incited the hearers to imitate them in holy living—but the holiness of the saints—the miracle of God's grace—was the miracle which impressed St Hugh above all miracles.

XV

HUGH OF LINCOLN AND RICHARD CŒUR DE LION

THE bishop of Lincoln was in his place in Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Richard I on September 3rd, 1189 ; but on the following day when the barons and bishops of England were assembled to pay the customary homage to the new king, he arrived very late. They grew uneasy, the assembled nobles, at this unaccountable absence. Messengers despatched to learn what had happened to the bishop of Lincoln returned with news. The bishop after saying Mass early as usual, had left for the palace in good time. But on the way noticing a corpse lying in the causeway, the body of a man killed in the anti-Jewish riot of the previous night it appeared, he had at once stopped to give burial to the dead. This was the more urgent work of charity when it turned out that the slain man was a Christian ; and the bishop had sent one of his retainers to buy a piece of cloth for a shroud for the body. Then he had proceeded with his attendants to bear the dead man, who seemed to be friendless and unknown, to the nearest cemetery. Not until the dead man had been duly committed to the earth

and the last prayers said did the bishop resume his journey to the palace.

However, though the bishop arrived late the king was later still, and St Hugh was in ample time for the audience.

A few months passed and Richard sailed for Palestine, leaving his brother prince John ripe for treason, and William Longchamp, bishop of Ely—shortly to become justiciar and papal legate—chancellor of the realm.

On the king's return to England came the first conflict with the bishop of Lincoln. It was of course a financial question, since Richard was always in need of money, for the crusades, the ransom and his wars in France.

How could Richard touch the bishop for a present of money? The courtiers had a scheme. In the good old days the bishops of Lincoln were accustomed to bring the king a handsome mantle, adorned with sable fur, a really magnificent piece of apparel, worth at least 100 silver marks. Annually was this furred mantle presented to the king by the diocese, but the custom had lapsed when Walter the Cornishman was bishop of Lincoln. Suddenly St Hugh, knowing nothing of this present of a furred mantle, was called upon not only to pay tribute to the crown, but, worse still, to meet a demand for arrears of this payment; arrears for ten years and more were owing.

Richard wanted ready money, but he was far from wishing to distress bishop Hugh of Lincoln, his father's friend. Therefore the king explained to St Hugh that 'to raise the wind' without personal loss

the obvious device was a general collection throughout the diocese for the royal tribute. The bishop would actually make a profit on this, for the response would be greater than the amount demanded. In fact, if this annual tribute were farmed out to St Hugh (and the king's taxes and papal dues, including Peter's Pence, were all farmed out, leaving the collector to make what he could out of the job), it would be to the bishop's financial gain. The king was actually putting the bishop on to a good thing if the bishop could only see it.

But the bishop didn't see it in that light at all. To play the part of a successful tax-collector was remote from the Carthusian life, and alien to the office of a bishop. It seemed to St Hugh that this demand for money was sheer extortion, the alleged tribute of the furred mantle no just feudal due. At the same time it could be argued, and it was argued, that the mantle, once established by custom, remained a feudal tribute to the crown and therefore the demand was lawful.

St Hugh decided that anyway it was a bad custom and that once and for all he would end it, and leave no ground for further dispute. He therefore agreed to pay the king 3000 silver marks in complete discharge of all past claims and with total exemption from all future demands.* The deed was signed releasing the bishop of Lincoln from the obligation of the furred mantle in October, A.D. 1194.

How was the bishop to find the money? The episcopal revenues were large, but nothing was saved

* So Giraldus Cambrensis, Vol. I, p. 266. But both the exact sum paid and the date of payment are disputed.

and the balance often on the wrong side ; so that there was recourse to borrowing. It was impossible to save money, when the calls on the bishop's purse and on his hospitality were continuous and not to be denied. Certainly an appeal would be made to the clergy of the diocese ; for after all they were now set free from any further demand for tribute. Yet to saddle the clergy with a debt incurred by their bishop was not to St Hugh's liking.

One thing he could do, and St Hugh resolved to do it. He could retire to Somerset and there in the priory live cheaply, for there was nothing to spend money on at Witham ; and with what was thus saved from income the debt would soon be cleared.

The clergy of the diocese would not hear of this retirement when St Hugh broached his plan for finding money for the king. They undertook to raise the money themselves. Reluctantly the bishop yielded, but only on condition that no one was pressed to pay and that the amount was raised by free-will offerings. A certain proportion was allotted from the revenues of the diocese, and thus the matter was settled. Wistfully the bishop thought of Witham. The generosity of his clergy frustrated the hope of a long retreat with his brethren of the charterhouse.

On the next issue with the king St Hugh dared not compromise, for it touched the conscience too sharply. The abbey of Eynsham was directly and solely under the care of the bishop of Lincoln ever since bishop Remigius rebuilt it in the days of William the Conqueror. A royal charter declared this. Therefore when abbot Godfrey died in 1195, St Hugh sent one of his clergy to Eynsham as his

representative, with instructions to remain there until a new abbot was canonically elected. But a vacant abbey was an opportunity to find money for the king. For forty-four years had Godfrey been abbot and now that he was dead what could be simpler than to assert the king's claim to the patronage of the abbey? Richard in France, at war with Philip, was calling out for money, and the patronage of Eynsham abbey could be sold for hard cash. Against the ancient charter of William the Conqueror the king's friends brought forward a general constitution of Henry II, placing all abbeys in the king's gift. St Hugh's friends thought there was a good deal to be said for this later institution, and begged him in any case not to come into conflict with Richard. Was it worth while to challenge the crown on so small a point? Why run into danger and incur heavy expense and loss over the question of appointing an abbot?

To St Hugh this surrender of a sacred trust to the crown was no trifling matter. The churches of God and the religious houses were actually the property of Christ, of His Mother the Queen of Heaven, and the saints to whom they were dedicated. That was St Hugh's deep conviction. He held himself to be but the custodian of estates solemnly bequeathed to God. Churches dedicated to Our Lady, as was the cathedral church of Lincoln, belonged to Our Lady; were the dowry of Our Lady. Similarly churches dedicated to St Peter or St Paul belonged to those apostles.*

* There was nothing strange or new in this belief; for in England at least, it is expressed in the bequests of king Ethelbert, and in *Domesday Book*.

The bishop was the custodian, the almoner, to whom was allotted the responsibility of distributing the temporals of the estate to the poor and needy. To hand over church property to the secular power was to give what was not his to give ; was in fact to rob the poor of their goods, and the saints of their patrimony. So much was clear to St Hugh. No decree of king or mortal man, he explained to those who would have him yield this abbey of Eynsham, ought to prevail over the justice of Christ and the honour of His Mother. Even if one admitted the lawfulness of this constitution of king Henry it could not annul the earlier ordinance. No bishop of Lincoln had ever admitted this encroachment ; and a layman—for the king was, after all, a layman—had no authority to override the liberties of the church. So far from abandoning the liberties the church had won, the pity was these liberties were not extended. It would be shameful if the liberties were curtailed through the weakness of a faint-hearted shepherd and not preserved intact.

It was, as his advisers had foretold, a long and costly business for the bishop of Lincoln—the defence of the abbey of Eynsham against the suit of the crown. It involved journeys to France for personal interviews with Richard, and conferences with high nobles. The case itself was argued in the king's courts for more than two years before a mixed jury of clerks and laymen ultimately decided that the charter of William the Conqueror gave to the bishop of Lincoln and his successors the rights that St Hugh maintained.

Then at last the cause was decided and to Eynsham,

where St Hugh himself had been first elected to the see of Lincoln, went the bishop ; to dwell with the monks while they proceeded to elect a new abbot. And the election over the bishop returned to Lincoln and in the cathedral consecrated the abbot-elect ; and afterwards to celebrate the occasion he gave a great feast to the new abbot, the monks who had accompanied him and many clergy of the diocese.

Fresh and graver troubles arose on the king's next demand for money.

At the council held at Oxford in December 1197, which archbishop Hubert the justiciar summoned, all the barons, spiritual and temporal, were asked to satisfy the needs of the king in his war with Philip of France by the provision of 300 knights ; each knight to receive three English shillings per day and to serve for twelve months. The demand for this immense sum was unprecedented ; nothing like this amount of money and this definite term of service abroad had ever previously been required of the English barony.

Eloquently and earnestly archbishop Hubert pleaded the king's necessities, avowing his own readiness to sacrifice if needs be not only his property but his very life in the service of the king. Richard, bishop of London, the treasurer, spoke to the same effect.

What would bishop Hugh of Lincoln say ? Prelates and nobles waited silently, expectantly, when his turn came. For a while he seemed absorbed in prayer. Then, his meditations over, the bishop arose. It was a very short speech St Hugh delivered but it

was decisive. 'I am but a stranger in this realm,' he began, 'for, as you, my lords, know well, I was hauled out of the cloister and from my hermit's life to have this burden of a bishopric placed upon me. But since the care of the church of our dear Lady, Mary, Mother of God, was committed to me I felt bound, inexperienced as I was, to make close study of the rights and privileges no less than of the duties and responsibilities of this church. And now for nearly twelve years have I striven to be faithful to the customs of the diocese and to depart not in the least degree from the precedents set by those who have gone before me. The bishop of Lincoln is bound to furnish the king with a due number of armed men for the defence of the realm, that is plain. He is not bound to furnish men for service abroad and this present demand is quite contrary to all that has ever been required of the see of Lincoln. Rather than give way to it and enslave my church and put it in chains with so heavy a debt I am determined to go back to my own country and end my days in the solitude I left.'¹⁸

Archbishop Hubert was furious ; his lips quivered with passion when St Hugh had finished.

And the bishop of Lincoln did not stand alone in opposition. For the next speaker was the bishop of Salisbury, Herbert—no saint but a cleric trained in official work, intimate with the business of the king's exchequer. Bishop Herbert declared himself entirely in agreement with the bishop of Lincoln. He went so far as to say that to take any other course would be gravely to the prejudice of the church of Sarum.

With these two against him the archbishop knew

it was useless to go on. Bitterly he assailed the bishop of Lincoln, and then announcing the business of the council at an end bade prelates and barons depart to their homes. Shortly after this the archbishop resigned his justiciarship ; but before resigning he sent messengers to Richard in Normandy, telling the king how it was the plan for three hundred knights had come to nothing.

Richard, learning that he had been thwarted by two bishops, raged and swore vengeance. He retaliated with immediate confiscation of the property of the bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln by order of the crown. King's officers were sent to take possession of diocesan estates.

Bishop Herbert of Salisbury was ruthlessly despoiled, for that unfortunate prelate was an easy victim, incapable of resistance. Who minded bishop Herbert's threats ? Who dreaded bishop Herbert's excommunications ? Such spiritual censures were worth no more than the paper they were written on.

To interfere with the bishop of Lincoln was a vastly more difficult enterprise ; to seize episcopal property in the diocese of Lincoln was more than difficult, it was highly dangerous. They were stout fellows, the officers of king Richard, men of no conspicuous delicacy of mind, and notoriously of quite unostentatious piety. No exuberance of finer feelings restrained the royal officers from dealing with the bishop of Lincoln as they had dealt with his brother of Salisbury ; sheer terror unnerved them. Bishop Hugh had declared in the most downright fashion that whoever laid a finger on house or land, on plate or other movables that belonged to the

diocese of Lincoln would by so doing at once incur the excommunication of the church. It was a sentence that made the toughest of king's officers hesitate. They had heard what had happened time and again when the bishop of Lincoln pronounced sentence of excommunication. A reasonable risk was all in the day's work of an officer of the crown, but it amounted to suicide, nothing less than suicide, to fly in the face of the bishop of Lincoln's excommunication. On the other hand the king was asking impatiently why nothing was being done in the case of Lincoln. Month after month the king's officers made excuses for delay, invented pretexts for the non-fulfilment of the royal commands. Richard, after all, was in Normandy and it was safer to procrastinate than to face mortal risk by incurring the excommunication of bishop Hugh. There were too many grim stories of the fate of those excommunicated by bishop Hugh for the liking of king's officers.

But the royal pressure could not be evaded indefinitely. The king's officers were driven to seek the bishop himself. They told him their difficulties and implored him to see the king in person and so put an end to the orders and warrants for seizing the bishop's property. St Hugh reflected on the unhappy dilemma of these men, and in his charity decided that he must make the journey to Normandy and see the king. He reached Rouen in August, 1198, and there was met by William, earl of Pembroke, the marshal (the great regent of Henry III's minority), and William, earl of Albemarle. The two nobles enjoyed high rank at the court of

Richard and at the same time held the bishop of Lincoln in deep respect. To show their friendly disposition they suggested they might act as mediators. The king was angry, thoroughly upset, in fact, and the last thing they wanted was that the bishop of Lincoln should suffer as bishop Herbert of Salisbury had suffered. Perhaps if they, the king's servants, pleaded the bishop's cause it might help to make things easier?

For the kindness and good-will that prompted the offer St Hugh thanked them with all his heart. Nevertheless it were better not to accept it; and St Hugh explained why. 'I do most sincerely sympathize with the king, for he has many trials, many anxieties, and you, my lords, are very necessary to him. To you more than others he is attached, and he is bound to you by gratitude. It is for that reason I would not have you plead for me. The king is vexed with me at present and he would either refuse to listen to you, and in that case you would be less zealous for him, or he would listen out of gratitude, thinking he was doing you a great favour, and excuse himself for doing any more. Therefore, please do this for me. Tell the king I have come all the way to Normandy to see him and that I hope he will grant me an interview.'

The two earls realized the force of the argument, and appreciating the fine spirit of the bishop's reply, went back to the king with a report of the conversation. Richard, however hardly he treated his friends, could always forgive his enemies; he loved a gallant foe. The bishop of Lincoln had behaved as an enemy, but the old man was a brave enemy.

Richard sent word that he would receive the bishop in three days' time at the new castle he had built on the rock near Andely. This castle was the famous Château Gaillard, the fortress which had cost so much to build, on the rock of Andelys by the Seine.

To the Château Gaillard came St Hugh on St Augustine's Day, August 28th, to be told that the king was at Mass in the chapel. So they went into the chapel, St Hugh and his chaplains, and as they entered the epistle had just been read and the choir were beginning one of the immensely long hymns called sequences, which throughout the Middle Ages were sung between the epistle and gospel ; each diocese providing its own local compositions for the most part.

The king sat near the door on a throne facing the altar. Nobles, bishops and archbishops were seated around him and on the steps of his throne. St Hugh approached, but when he saluted the king with fitting respect, Richard stared fiercely at him and then turned away his head. St Hugh was not cast down by Richard's silence. Similarly had Richard's father behaved at Woodstock some ten years earlier. Quickly moved to wrath, quickly stirred by love, children of strong passions these Angevin princes ! ' Give me the kiss of peace, my lord king,' said the bishop softly while the choir continued their hymn. But the king kept his head turned from the bishop and said nothing. It was too ridiculous, and the courtiers wondered fearfully what would happen next. St Hugh came nearer and gently shook the king's mantle. ' I have come a long way to see you, and your greeting is due to me ; I have a right to

it.' On that the king broke silence. 'You have no right to it, you have not deserved it.'

'Oh yes I have,' the bishop answered; 'come now, you must give me the kiss of peace, you owe it to me.' With that the bishop shook the royal mantle again, and this time so forcibly that the king himself was shaken. In a moment the king's anger was melted, he could do nothing in the face of so unexpected, so unconventional a greeting. With a smile Richard gave St Hugh the kiss of peace he had claimed.

Courtiers round the throne looked at one another in doubt and strange surmise. Bishops hastily moved that St Hugh might seat himself amongst them. But St Hugh shook his head and walking up to the altar, there knelt alone. With eyes downcast that no longer gazed on earthly kings or rested in their courts, St Hugh gave his soul to meditation and prayer while the holy sacrifice was offered.

Richard watched him kneeling humbly near the altar and was satisfied. This good old man would be praying for him, Richard; the king felt it and was conscious of an impulse to lead a new and better life. Yield to a rival in war or feats of arms never would king Richard; had he not sworn he would defend this Château Gaillard, 'though it were made of butter,' against Philip of France who had boasted he would take it 'though it were built of iron'? To yield to this holy and humble servant of the King of kings was no shame to king Richard; before all present he was eager to avow his esteem for the bishop of Lincoln.

It was the custom after the *Agnus Dei* had been

sung for the celebrant to kiss the sacred Host—or the altar—and then to kiss a small instrument called the pax-brede (pax-board), which was next handed in turn to the assistants at the altar to be kissed and then to persons of importance in the congregation. It was the sign of peace. An archbishop brought the pax-brede to the king, but the monarch could not wait on his throne ; impetuously he strode up the chapel to meet the archbishop, and having kissed the pax he turned to St Hugh, and instead of handing him the instrument kissed him directly on the lips. Thus all might see how greatly the king revered the bishop of Lincoln.

After Mass, in a private audience with the king, the bishop explained very briefly what had occurred at the council of Oxford. Richard at once threw the blame on archbishop Hubert who, he said, had misled him as to the facts. St Hugh next repudiated warmly the notion of unfriendliness. In no way had he ever gone counter to the king's wishes save where his own soul or the soul of the king demanded it.

Richard overflowed with admiration for the bishop of Lincoln, offering him valuable gifts, and insisting that he must be his guest and stay at the new fort of Port-Joie which had just been built on an island on the Seine close by, and come back and see him next day. St Hugh determined to take advantage of the king's amiability ; it was an opportunity to speak to the king of his soul that must not be lost. Taking him by the hand St Hugh led the king behind the altar and there made him sit down beside him while he spoke with the authority of a spiritual father. For Richard was born in Oxford,

in the diocese of Lincoln, and the bishop counted him as one of his flock. 'Tell me, my lord king,' said the bishop, 'how it is with your conscience, for I may be able to help you, and it is now a year since we last spoke about it together.'

Richard answered that his conscience was fairly healthy, except that he felt a bitter hatred against all his enemies who were trying to overthrow him.

The bishop sought urgently to persuade him to examine more closely his conscience and to know his faults. As to the king's enemies, if Richard were at peace with the King of kings these enemies would soon be overcome. Mortal sin was the one enemy the king need fear, sin against God and sin against one's neighbour. Calmly and gravely the bishop spoke of Richard's sins against his wife, and of the wrong he did to the church in his nominations and appointments; the crime it was to give the cure of souls to men who gave presents or happened to be favourites. As long as the king did such things he must not look to God for a friend.

And Richard listened, sometimes interrupting with excuses, at other times confessing his failings and asking the bishop's prayers. At last St Hugh gave him his blessing and the king withdrew.

The bishop retired to his chamber, and the king, knowing that he abstained from flesh meat, arranged for a specially fine pike to be cooked for his dinner.

On the king's return to his courtiers Richard's enthusiasm for St Hugh was unrestrained. 'If all the prelates of the church were like the bishop of Lincoln, in truth no prince or king in all Christendom would dare say a word in their presence,' he cried

out. Thereupon the courtiers thought something might be made out of this reconciliation with bishop Hugh. Why not get the good bishop to carry letters from the king to the barons of England asking them to vote another subsidy for the war in France? Coming from the bishop of Lincoln the appeal would be irresistible, while the bishop would be only too glad to do a little thing like this for the king.

They never understood the bishop, these courtiers. When the scheme was unfolded before him St Hugh at once shook his head. In vain his own clergy joined with the court in begging him just to gratify the king in a matter which, after all, would cost nothing.

‘It won’t do,’ St Hugh replied. ‘God forbid I should be guilty of such weakness. It is not only against my own inclinations, it is a disgrace to my office. A bishop is not a royal courier to carry messages from kings, and I cannot and will not co-operate in extortions of this kind. Do you not know, my lords, that the king who puts out one hand for alms holds a drawn sword behind his back with the other? He may utter fair words at first and make many promises, but in the end it comes to a harsh distraint; not what the subject is willing to give, but what the sovereign chooses to demand, is the rule. So that it happens that what at first is often given freely and spontaneously comes to be regarded as a right of the crown and is extorted by force. Never will I meddle with such methods. I might perhaps gain the favour of my king, I should certainly incur the wrath of God.’

The courtiers were disappointed and the bishop

asked them to make the king understand that it was no use pursuing the matter. Richard without further argument surrendered and gave the bishop leave to return to England the next day, excusing him from another audience. St Hugh, with a *Te Deum* of thankfulness for thus being allowed to depart, set off on his return journey to England.

XVI

THE LAST CONTEST WITH KING RICHARD

THE spell that St Hugh cast upon Cœur de Lion lost its virtue when the bishop was absent. Richard, left to his knights and courtiers, passed swiftly from the restraining influence. Within a few months of the bishop of Lincoln's visit Richard was once more importunate in demands that could never be granted.

Not directly in this case was the bishop of Lincoln approached. An appeal direct invited the direct negative ; and, both king and courtiers might infer, would most probably receive it. But Richard was in need of ambassadors ; he needed in especial capable ambassadors to represent his interests at Rome and in Germany and in Spain ; trustworthy men, with money of their own, not dependent on the royal exchequer for expenses. Such men were rare and hard to find,—outside the diocese of Lincoln, where clerks, men of learning and character, were well endowed with prebends.

It was suggested to the king that twelve canons of Lincoln could be had for the asking ; but let the asking be done through archbishop Hubert and not through the holy—and quite impractical—bishop Hugh. The latter, it was obvious to courtiers, never

understood the king's difficulties, never really sympathized with Richard's struggles against his enemies. The archbishop was the man for the king in the present rather delicate position. Let the archbishop of Canterbury arrange in his own way for the despatch of these twelve canons of Lincoln without troubling holy Hugh.

Richard, persuaded that this was the better policy, promptly wrote to archbishop Hubert calling upon him to select twelve canons from the cathedral clergy of Lincoln, clerks gifted with discretion and with persuasive powers of speech ; men capable of looking after the king's interests and of representing him—at their own expense—in Rome, Germany, Spain or elsewhere.

The archbishop without a word of remonstrance agreed to carry out the king's orders. Since the king was in want of ambassadors, and there were no laymen competent to represent him, ecclesiastics must be provided. It was customary to employ ecclesiastics as ambassadors, and what men were more suitable than canons of Lincoln? Besides, the king had asked specially for these canons and therefore the responsibility did not rest on the archbishop of Canterbury. Still, the order must pass through the bishop of Lincoln, the proper formalities be observed.

Therefore archbishop Hubert wrote to twelve of the best known prebendaries of Lincoln requiring their attendance and bidding them prepare as speedily as possible to depart to Normandy and there await the king's pleasure. These twelve letters the archbishop enclosed in a parcel to the

bishop of Lincoln with a request to his suffragan to distribute them to the persons named. The archbishop further mentioned that as these canons were applied for by the king it would be well for them not to delay their departure.

St Hugh was at his manor of Buckden in Huntingdonshire when the archbishop's messenger found him, and it was just upon dinner-time. St Hugh took the parcel, opened the letter addressed to himself, read it through and, without a word to the messenger, sat down to table with his clergy, to whom he briefly mentioned the substance of the archbishop's letter. At once and all through dinner an excited ripple of talk could be noticed. The clergy present, without venturing to advise their bishop openly, hoped what they said to one another would be overheard. While they spoke in asides their opinions were plain. In a case like this the best course was to adopt a moderate and conciliatory attitude. There was no doubt it was a serious position. There was general agreement that the most prudent policy would be first to appeal to the archbishop and persuade him to cancel the command he had sent.

St Hugh heard all that was said—as they meant him to—and knew it was useless to consult these clergy who were already downcast with fear at the thought of the king receiving a direct rebuff.

Not until dinner was over did St Hugh address the archbishop's messenger, and the words he uttered made that puffed-up and supercilious ecclesiastic almost choke with anger. Sternly spoke the bishop :

‘ Understand that I am referring not only to the king’s request but also the postscript of my lord archbishop when I say this new demand is something entirely without precedent. Tell the archbishop from me that I have no intention of acting as his letter carrier. Never have I done so in the past and never will I do so in the future ; just as I never have asked and never will ask any of my clergy to give feudal service to the crown. Over and over again have I interfered to prevent ecclesiastics with benefices in this diocese from becoming forest justices or public officials of any kind and placing themselves at the beck and call of the world. I have even punished those who ignored my advice, often depriving them of their prebends, and withholding their revenues for a considerable time. How would it be possible for me to root up from the very heart of my church the men whom I am asked to send away on the king’s service ? Isn’t it bad enough that archbishops are neglecting the sacred duties of their offices at the peril of their immortal souls by throwing all their energies into state affairs at the king’s behest ? Well, if the king is still dissatisfied, then the canons he has asked for shall go ; but their bishop shall go with them, and from the mouth of the king and from no other lips shall the king’s commands be received ; and those commands as far as they are just and lawful shall be obeyed. And as for you, my reverend sir, you will take back with you the twelve letters you have brought—and a very good riddance to you and your letters. But remember, please, to repeat to the archbishop all I have said to you, and impress upon him that if any of my clergy are to go

to the king I shall most certainly go with them. They travelled with me on previous occasions and now I shall travel with them. It is the right relation of a good shepherd to his sheep and of the sheep to the shepherd, that the shepherd should not expose his flock to danger by letting them stray and that the sheep should not leave their shepherd and wander at large.'

Before the archbishop's messenger, foaming in wrath, could bring out the insulting answer that he struggled to express the bishop silenced him with stern and peremptory dismissal. With bedraggled feathers the haughty ecclesiastic slunk away—to tell my lord archbishop at Canterbury of the treatment he had received.

St Hugh also sent certain of his most trusted clergy to the archbishop to seek to persuade him not to violate the principles of his holy office ; and above all to beseech him not to become the tool of the king and give authority to orders that in his conscience he knew to be wrong. Archbishop Hubert was not unmoved by these appeals, though at the same time he complained that his suffragan was disobedient. However, if he could back up the bishop of Lincoln's protest without injuring the cause of the king the archbishop would do so. Also he would really do his best to check this scheme for sending twelve canons abroad ; and if unable to stop it entirely he would modify the demand to the best of his ability.

The bishop had not the least confidence in the smooth words of archbishop Hubert, and the distrust, amply justified by past experience, deepened when instead of hearing that the king had cancelled

or postponed his demand St Hugh was notified that an edict of the crown had been issued for the seizure of the bishop of Lincoln's property.

'I told you so,' said St Hugh to his clergy. 'The voice of the archbishop may be the voice of Jacob, the hands are the hands of Esau.'

However, thinking it might be worth while to make a personal appeal to the archbishop, St Hugh posted off to London. It was a fruitless interview. Archbishop Hubert had nothing to say except that the king wanted money and that the only thing to be done was for the bishop of Lincoln to send as big a sum as he could raise. 'The king has the thirst for money that a man with dropsy has for water,' said the archbishop by way of explaining things.

The explanation left the bishop of Lincoln unmoved. 'That's as it may be,' he replied; 'but because the king suffers from dropsy I've no desire to be the water that he swallows to relieve his thirst.'

The effort to persuade archbishop Hubert to take his stand on the right side was all wasted time. St Hugh decided that he himself must again go to the king, and hurriedly returned to Lincoln to put things in order before leaving. The edict confiscating the property of the bishop of Lincoln to the crown had been published, but the obstacle to its enforcement remained. The king's officers were in mortal terror of the bishop's excommunication, and this time they said so to the king when Richard cursed the delay in executing his warrant.

Richard only scoffed at the cowardice of his English servants and would have sent his captain Mercadier, a savage, unscrupulous ruffian, to take

possession of the bishop of Lincoln's estates if a courtier had not remonstrated : ' My lord king, can you afford to lose Mercadier ? He is very useful to you, and depend upon it if he incurs the excommunication of the bishop of Lincoln you will lose him.'

Richard decided it was safer to keep Mercadier in Normandy, but he was still bent on getting the property of the bishop of Lincoln. Stephen of Turnham, a knight, who had held office under Henry II, and was a sheriff of Wiltshire, was commanded to carry out the royal mandate. Sir Stephen disliked the job, for he greatly venerated the bishop of Lincoln ; yet he feared to disobey the king. Remaining in the background himself the knight of Turnham sent a body of men to seize in his name the estates of the bishop of Lincoln.

St Hugh had taken farewell of his people in Lincoln cathedral and was moving with his canons towards London when, near Peterborough, he met the band sent north by Stephen. The men were on their way to Sleaford, instructed to take possession of the manor which belonged to the diocese of Lincoln. At the sight of the bishop and his retinue Stephen's officers at once withdrew from the road. When St Hugh had passed they sought, with profuse excuses and apologies, to explain to the bishop's servants that the business they were on they utterly loathed, but they had no choice in the matter. Only they implored the bishop not to lay them under sentence of excommunication. If the bishop was going to see the king they for their part promised no harm should come to the bishop's property in his absence.

When this was told to the bishop all he said was : ' It is not for men like these to guard our property. They may do their worst. Only if they but touch our possessions, which are the possessions of our Queen, Mary, holy mother of God, they do it at grave peril.' Then the bishop drew from his breast the fringe of the stole which he always wore under his cloak when he travelled. ' Of one thing you may be sure,' he went on to say, and shook the fringe as he spoke, ' this small strip of linen is strong enough to effect complete restoration down to the very last farthing of all that anyone dares steal from us.'

(For the stole from the early centuries of the Christian era is the vestment that represents spiritual jurisdiction ; it is always worn by the priest at the administration of sacraments and at benedictions and excommunications.)

That same night at Buckden, before he rested, the bishop sent letters to the archdeacons and rural deans where the diocese had property bidding them summon the parish clergy and tell them directly the royal officers appeared solemnly with bell and candle to pronounce excommunication on all who laid sacrilegious hands on the estates of the church. Those who ordered the despoiling of the church and those who were merely the agents were alike placed under episcopal censure.

Then this duty accomplished and his conscience at rest, St Hugh went peacefully to bed and at once was asleep. That night his servants noted that in his dreams the bishop's *amen*, *amen* came more frequently than usual.

After leaving Buckden St Hugh halted a few miles

south and, dismounting, prepared to confirm a number of children who with parents and friends there awaited him. It was an unusually large crowd, for the rural dean had brought to the same spot the local *wise woman*, a reputed witch whom the peasants ran to for help and advice whenever they lost things or whenever they thought magic had been employed against them. According to the rural dean the woman was proof against all the efforts of the clergy, for she out-talked everyone who endeavoured to reason with her. Such a spate of words fell from her lips even when learned men sought to question her that it was impossible to do anything.

A talkative woman, witch or no witch, was no very alarming phenomenon to St Hugh. Were she possessed by an evil spirit the bishop would soon find out. Instead of addressing the woman the bishop called on whatever lying spirit was within her to answer a simple question. With the end of his stole gathered up in his right hand, 'Come now, tell me, if you can,' he said in a bantering tone, 'what I have hidden in my hand.'

At this the woman fell to the ground in a swoon and St Hugh bade the people standing near by to help her. She soon recovered, but St Hugh could make nothing of her Huntingdon dialect and the rural dean was called in to interpret. All the poor woman could say was that she knew nothing of magic and she begged the holy bishop to forgive her. So St Hugh laid his hand on her head and gave her his blessing. And afterwards the woman went to the prior of Huntingdon and there made confession and was absolved. Nor did she ever return to her

old ways, nor overreach her neighbours by pretence of occult powers, but frankly lamented her past life. No longer the over-talkative woman of former years she became singularly quiet and said but little.

On the next day when the bishop approached St Albans, and was already within the frontiers of the abbey lands—the famous abbey had for forty years past been exempt from all episcopal jurisdiction—he came upon a dismal sight ; a man with his hands tied behind his back in charge of a body of public officers. A thief, condemned to death, on the way to the gallows.

The whole party, guards and prisoner alike, recognizing the bishop, at once hurried forward for his blessing. The prisoner managed to wriggle almost under the hoofs of the bishop's horse and there on his knees he cried out piteously for mercy. The bishop, drawing rein, wanted to know who the man was and what he was in need of. On this the bishop's attendants began to feel nervous. There was no saying what the bishop would do, what rash orders he would give if the thief aroused his compassion ; there was no limit to the bishop's daring, no stopping his reckless ways should he decide to release the wretched thief.

In vain the bishop's attendants tried to get their lord away before he had time to do anything rash. 'Don't trouble about this man, your holiness,' they said, 'but let us get on with our journey. It is not a case that concerns your holiness at all.'

But the bishop's interest was not to be quenched in this way. He must needs have the whole story of

the man's crime. When he had heard it to the end the worst that his attendants feared happened.

‘ Well, God bless us ! ’ said the bishop, ‘ this is a sorry affair. I must take charge of this prisoner myself.’ Then he turned to the officers saying : ‘ Return with me to the town, my sons, and tell your superiors and the judges that I have taken your prisoner into my keeping and I will see that no blame falls on you.’

The guards, with no mind to act against the bishop's orders, handed their prisoner to his keeping, and the bishop, when he had seen that the prisoner's hands were unbound, placed him in the care of his almoner. So they all entered the town of St Albans together, the bishop with his chaplains and attendants, the prisoner and the official guards. The townspeople hardly knew what to make of this queer procession. Some thought the king's guards had arrested the holy bishop and cried shame on the persecutors. Others said the king had sent these guards to do honour to the bishop. Then they recognized the prisoner, no longer bound but walking cheerfully, and quickly learnt the truth.

No sooner had the bishop arrived at his lodgings than all his attendants came to him, begging and praying that he would not interfere any more in the thief's behalf or hinder the course of justice. So far, they urged, neither the king nor any man amongst the bishop's enemies had been able to reproach him with any real offence. There had been not the flimsiest pretext for taking proceedings against the bishop.

‘ But now, my lord,’ they concluded, ‘ if you take

it on yourself to annul by virtue of your authority as bishop a sentence passed by the king's judges in the king's court, and a sentence actually being carried out, then all who have any ill-will towards you will say you have acted in defiance of the crown and are in fact guilty of high treason.'

To the timorous remonstrance St Hugh answered : 'And so this is all your valour and your kindly feelings amount to. Well, go and ask the judges to come to me and listen to what passes between us.'

But the judges were already at the door seeking an audience with the bishop and St Hugh had only to invite them in and bid them be seated. Discussion on the question of sanctuary followed.

The bishop spoke first. 'You who are learned in the law know all about the right of sanctuary, the privilege of holy mother church throughout the world. It is the right to protect all condemned and all the proscribed who flee to her for refuge.'

Why, yes, the judges readily admitted, the rights of sanctuary must be respected.

'Then,' St Hugh argued, 'you must surely admit that where the bishop is, surrounded by the faithful, there is the church. The bishop not only consecrates the material stones that make up the church, he also sanctifies the living stones that far more truly make up the church of Christ, by administering sacraments which refashion men into temples of the Most High. Therefore whenever the bishop is present all the privileges which the church can claim belong to him, and he ought to be a living sanctuary for all who appeal to him in their need.'

The judges listened sympathetically, following

attentively the bishop's words. They spoke vaguely of a custom in the old English laws that confirmed what the bishop had said, and added that this custom had only become obsolete because the bishops had let it fall into disuse, and through the tyranny of kings. Finally the judges avowed themselves the sons of the bishop and members of his flock. 'You are our father and our shepherd. Far be it from us to dispute with you or challenge your prerogative, and we are sure that you will do nothing to expose us to serious danger by your act. Therefore we are willing that our prisoner should go free and will do nothing to hinder it. Only we look to you to take the full responsibility for the proceeding and to safeguard us from the royal displeasure.'

To this St Hugh at once agreed, congratulating the judges on their honest and straightforward speech. 'Let all know,' said the bishop, 'that I have forcibly rescued the prisoner from your hands ; that I stand ready and prepared to give an account for my violent deed whenever the need arises.'

The judges bade the bishop farewell and retired. The bishop carried the thief in his train to London. There the bishop gave him leave to depart and the thief was seen no more ; but whether he repented of his past rogueries or went back to his ill-doings, no man knows. No proceedings were taken against the bishop for giving sanctuary in this unusual manner. St Hugh heard nothing more of it. The incident was closed.¹⁹

In London the bishop of Lincoln called on the barons of the exchequer, in whose keeping were the estates of the diocese after an edict of confiscation,

hoping by a personal appeal to save the property from being wasted in his absence abroad. The barons welcomed him with many tokens of respect and esteem, rising from their seats and giving assurance that the estates should be protected ; everything they could do to prevent the property of the diocese being injured or ravaged should be done.

Then the barons asked him to sit down with them at the chequer board, the long exchequer table, worked in squares, where the business of the court was done. St Hugh hesitated and then yielded to the request. No sooner had he sat down than the barons, clapping their hands in great good humour, called out, ‘ Now we have won a victory, for we shall always be able to say we have seen the bishop of Lincoln sitting at the king’s exchequer.’

The bishop coloured, conscious that he had been caught ; for he had persistently opposed the work of the exchequer being done by ecclesiastics and more especially by bishops. However, not to take it amiss, and to turn it to good account, St Hugh thereupon embraced each one of them in turn, saying : ‘ And I can now boast of a victory, too ; for after giving me the kiss of peace it is impossible for you to take any hostile part against the church in my diocese.’

‘ That’s a clever move,’ said the barons. ‘ We are fairly tied up. Now we can’t do anything, even by the king’s order, against him without being dishonoured.’

Then St Hugh blessed them and departed, leaving London and taking the road for Dover.

At Rochester on the bridge over the Medway a

young man of wretched appearance attracted the bishop's attention. But the bishop was puzzled by the Kentish dialect, as he was by the dialect of Huntingdon ; only by the help of an interpreter could he understand the story related by the young man. An ill-spent life, with sin heaped upon sin, was, now that he was conscious of it, more than he could bear. A sermon had brought home to him the horror of his existence and the misery of it. Plunged into the most abject shame, not until he had fallen asleep had any comfort come to him. For then Our Lady the Mother of Mercy—he was sure it was Our Lady—had appeared and said : ' Poor boy, you must not give way to despair. My Son does not want any soul to be lost ; think of His tender mercies and His power. And now arise, and go and make a true and full confession of your sins to some priest whom you know.' And he had on awaking started out to find the priest, but had only gone a little when he met a horrible old man—it must have been the devil himself, the young man thought—who seemed to think that the best thing to be done was to commit suicide when one had lived such a blackguardly life. And this idea of suicide, ' though I know it means eternal death if one deliberately destroys oneself,' had so taken hold of him that it drove away the vision of Our Lady. Twice that very day had he resolved to jump off the bridge into the river and be drowned ; the first time there had been too many people about, and the second time, when he had worked himself up for the deed, he saw the bishop coming.

' Immediately when I came into the presence of

your holiness my tormented mind felt relief and I knew that I must tell you everything.'

St Hugh with a few encouraging and fatherly words invited the young man to join his train and follow to Canterbury ; which the young man did. In Canterbury St Hugh had to stay for fifteen days, waiting for favourable weather, for it was winter time, and this gave him opportunity to heal both body and soul of the penitent young man. For he suffered from ulcers, which afflicted him and were thought to be incurable. These the bishop cured by applying hot wax, for the wounds thus cicatrized promptly healed. Then the young man, taking the pilgrim's staff and wallet, set out on pilgrimage to Rome ; and after receiving the pope's blessing, he returned to England, became a lay-brother in a Cistercian monastery and faithfully persevered in his religious calling.

Not until February, 1199, did St Hugh reach Normandy. At the beginning of Lent he went to stay at the manor house belonging to the abbey of St Nicholas in Angers, for the monks of Angers had a priory at Spalding in the diocese of Lincoln. King Richard had signed a five years' truce with Philip of France, but he was now at war with the viscount of Limoges and violently besieging the castle of Chalus. St Hugh therefore decided not to seek an audience till the time was more suitable.

Daily at Angers was St Hugh beset by his clergy with earnest appeals to compromise with the king. Stories of the king's anger, rumours of the vengeance the king had promised to take on all his enemies, filled the Lincoln canons with the utmost alarm.

They were devoted to their bishop, they had the greatest reverence for his sanctity, they were loyal to his authority. But—there were limits to the endurance of canons. This land of Normandy was a highly dangerous place for all who dared challenge the royal will, and their bishop was not merely risking his own life, he was bringing his clergy who accompanied him into jeopardy. The canons of Hereford who were also at Angers had their grievance against the bishop of Lincoln. They wanted Walter Map, archdeacon of Oxford and precentor and chancellor of Lincoln, for their bishop and it was extremely unlikely that Richard would allow any ecclesiastic of Lincoln to be made a bishop as long as he was opposed by the bishop of that diocese.

Tortured mentally by the separation from his clergy with whom he had always striven to live in peace and unity, plagued by the peevish laments of good men too fearful of their own discomfort to realize the larger issues at stake, St Hugh was hard pressed by his friends. They painted in lurid colours the terrible conditions that prevailed all around, and besought the bishop to do as archbishop Hubert had advised and give the king a large present of money. That would appease the king ; the trouble would be over, and bishop and canons would be free to return home. Every day things went from bad to worse in this land of strife ; soon no place would be safe from the horrors of war, and while to remain would be madness, it would be impossible to get away in safety.

In vain the bishop tried to point out that to yield in the compromising way they asked him to do was

to surrender the liberties of the church ; that the reasons given for yielding to the king were not sound. ' If I were to act in the manner you advise,' the bishop concluded, ' we should not only lose our case, we should lose it in utter dishonour ; we should place the liberties of the church under the very heel of the crown and we should be as far as ever from the peace we want. For having bought peace at a monstrously exorbitant price we should find next day that peace already broken and all our work to be done over again.'

It made no difference what the bishop said. So devoured by fear were his clergy that they continued to argue, to beg and entreat, to expostulate and complain. Their whining tones, their incessant nagging filled the soul of bishop Hugh with bitterness. If they had not been his friends, friends of long standing, he would have silenced them with a curt reply ; as he dealt with kings and courtiers. But to deal with friends in that peremptory fashion, to snap the cords that bound him to his clergy—not if it could be helped. At length, worn out by their importunities, St Hugh promised to give them a final decision on the morrow. ' Brethren, the silence of the night is a good counsellor, enough for to-day. To-morrow with God's help we will decide together what is best to be done for His glory.'

That night to one loyal friend, his chaplain (and biographer), St Hugh admitted that never before in his life had so bad a time overtaken him, never had so difficult a problem confronted him. Then he betook himself to prayer, praying for light and guidance, praying that he might be shown the right

course. When sleep came he had a wonderful dream and heavenly voices soothed him with the words of the psalmist : ‘ Wonderful is God in His saints ; the God of Israel is He who will give power and strength to His people.’

In the morning St Hugh awoke and his mind was no longer troubled ; all the doubts and uncertainties of the previous days were gone. He accused himself of a want of trust in God, he blamed himself for having hesitated, for not having rejected positively the unworthy proposals of his friends.

For some days his clergy kept away from him. They were uneasy because they felt they had wounded the bishop with their complaints ; also they saw the futility of their petitions.

The next thing that happened was a visit from Matilda, abbess of Pontevrault, who brought secret news to St Hugh of the mortal sickness of king Richard. For on the very day, March 26th, when St Hugh was torn with doubt and difficulty, Richard was struck by the fatal arrow outside the castle of Chalus. When the arrow broke in his shoulder and could not be removed, and mortification set in, Richard knew that his end had come. He sent word to his mother, Eleanor, who was staying at the abbey of Pontevrault, and she hastened to her dying son after telling the abbess of what had happened.

The castle of Chalus was stormed as the life of Richard ebbed. He made his peace before death took him and pardoned the archer who had shot him. (But that did not prevent Mercadier from putting the archer to death after horrible tortures.) To the Cistercian abbot of Notre Dame du Pin in

Poitiers, Richard made his confession and he died penitent and forgiven on April 6th.

With the death of Cœur de Lion ended the troubles of the bishop and canons of Lincoln. St Hugh on being told that the king would be buried at Pontevrault, set out for the funeral.

XVII

RELATIONS WITH KING JOHN

THE canons and others attending the bishop tried in vain to dissuade him from the journey to Pontevrault. The roads were full of robbers ; his very messengers coming from England with money had been plundered by brigands ; travelling was a more dangerous thing than ever since the king's death ; so they pointed out. Far better to stay at Angers for the present. St Hugh waived all such objections aside. Nothing should stop him, he replied to his nervous friends, from paying the last respects due to his king. ' As for robbers, why, even if they take all I have they won't stop me from going to Pontevrault. They would have to bind my feet to do that.'

So with Adam his chaplain, and only a single clerk besides, and with very few servants and hardly any luggage, St Hugh left Angers. His route brought him near Castle Beaufort, and when he was told that Richard's widow, queen Berengaria, was staying there, St Hugh must needs break his journey to give what comfort could be given to that long-suffering woman. He told her of Richard's penitence and of God's forgiveness, and the words brought healing and consolation to the bereaved. Then next morning, having said Mass and blessed her, the

bishop took the road to Saumur, where the people came out to meet him, anxious to do him honour. At Saumur St Hugh stayed one night in the house of a clerk, Gilbert de Lacy, who had brought him news of where Richard was to be buried.

It was Palm Sunday when St Hugh reached Pontevrault, and at the entrance to the abbey church was the coffin which held the mortal remains of Richard Cœur de Lion. The funeral service had just begun and St Hugh sang the solemn requiem and said the last prayers, when they laid the body of Richard to rest where his father, king Henry II, rested. All being over, the bishop went back to the house of Gilbert de Lacy in Saumur. He stayed there till the Wednesday in Holy Week, visiting the abbey each morning to say Mass and recite the office of the dead, and making arrangements to return home.

John was proclaimed king at Chinon on that same Wednesday in Holy Week, A.D. 1199, by Robert of Turnham—brother of Stephen, Richard's officer—and other English nobles ; and John in return swore to govern according to the ancient laws and customs of the English people and faithfully to carry out all that Richard had wished to have done. It seemed an excellent beginning when the new king spoke enthusiastically of the bishop of Lincoln and would have it that messengers must go to Saumur and beg the bishop to honour him with a visit. The king could not even await the bishop's arrival, but went out from Chinon to meet him. When the bishop drew near the king dismounted and went forward alone to welcome St Hugh personally and with every

expression of pleasure. There was nothing that John would not do to show his reverence and regard for St Hugh. They must not be separated, said the king, while they remained in Normandy but must travel back to England together. John was positively fulsome. The bishop begged to be excused ; he was anxious to return. All that he could promise was to accompany the king to Pontevrault Abbey and Saumur.

On the way to Pontevrault, while they rode side by side, St Hugh preached a homily on the whole duty of a Christian king ; the devotion due to God and the mercy and justice owed to man. John in reply professed to be greatly edified, vowing at the same time that the bishop should henceforth be his adviser and counsellor, his father and master. Then to prove that he had no secrets from his spiritual father, John showed him a stone set in gold which he wore as a charm or talisman round his neck ; explaining at the same time that it had been given to one of his ancestors with the assurance that as long as it was safely retained the king's dominions should also be retained. In answer St Hugh warned him not to trust in stones. There was one living and heavenly stone, which was our Lord Jesus Christ, and on that rock and that alone should our hearts be anchored. He bade him remember that this heavenly stone could crush those who resisted it as certainly as it could support those who trusted to it.

On their arrival at Pontevrault Abbey John was for entering the choir where his father and brother were entombed. But the nuns explained that in the absence of the abbess it was forbidden under their

rule for any stranger to enter the choir ; for the choir was within the enclosure. John was not offended. He made great promises of grants and concessions to the nuns of Pontevrault, imploring St Hugh to witness all his promises and to get the nuns to pray for him. St Hugh hesitated. He had a horror, he told the king, of falsehoods of every kind. 'I cannot tell the nuns anything of your promises unless you really mean to keep them.' Was it possible that John, the breaker of promises to Henry his father, and to Richard, a man habitually false to his word, was changed ? John swore that he would do more than keep his promises, he would increase the benefactions he had named.

Then St Hugh told the nuns all that the new king had promised to do for their abbey and asked them in return to pray for the blessing of God on the king and to commend his kingdom to the protection of God. Leaving the church St Hugh pointed out to John the sculptured figures on the wall of the porch. The scene represented was the Last Judgment, and the bishop, taking John by the hand, showed him the figures of kings in the full dress of royalty amongst the lost. 'Remember, my son, the eternal punishment that awaits all wicked kings. Think of the misery that is the fate of those who, set to govern others, cannot govern themselves and become the servants of the devil.'

John, not in the least abashed, then took the bishop's hand and showed him the stone figures carved on the opposite wall ; figures of kings crowned with glory, led by angels into paradise, were amongst the saved. 'These, my lord bishop,

are the kings you ought to have shown me. For it's their example I am going to follow, so that one day I may share their company for all eternity.'

John was on his best behaviour for the rest of the Great Week. Beggars by the roadside had their salutations returned with the utmost courtesy. Every old woman who curtsied to him received a gracious bow in return. Not till Easter Sunday did John begin to tire of keeping up appearances. The bishop said Mass at Beaufort on that day and John assisted.

St Hugh had a rule for himself and his chaplains that no fee or stipend should be taken when officiating in churches outside the diocese, but John's chamberlain, as a matter of course, handed the king twelve pieces of gold at the offertory to be presented at the altar. John went up to the altar with his attendants when the time came, but instead of presenting his alms and kissing the bishop's hand, according to the custom of the age, he stood there looking at the money he held and jangling the coins in his hand.

The bishop asked sternly what he was looking at. 'I'm looking at these gold pieces,' John answered, 'and I was just thinking that if I had possessed them a few days ago I should have kept them in my purse instead of giving them to you. But there they are, and you can have them.'

St Hugh was indignant. 'Put what you have in the plate and retire,' he said gravely, refusing to touch the gold or allow John to kiss his hand. So the king put the twelve gold pieces in the silver alms-dish and retired.

When the bishop began to preach, both the subject and length of the sermon were equally disrelished by the king. For St Hugh decided to improve the occasion by a long and eloquent discourse on the duties of princes, and the fate that was reserved for bad rulers and the rewards promised to the good. There were murmurs of applause in the congregation, but John wanted his dinner and three times sent a messenger to the preacher to ask him to leave off preaching and get on with the Mass. St Hugh, taking no notice of the interruptions, continued to speak for some time of the Easter communion many were about to make. So great was his fervour that the people were moved to tears.

The service finished at last, and John was thankful to escape. He did not receive the holy sacrament on that Easter Sunday, neither did he on the day of his coronation. And it is said by those who were a lifetime in his service that not once except in boyhood did John kneel at the Lord's Table or make his communion.

On Easter Monday the bishop bade the king farewell and started on his journey back to England. John proceeded to Rouen and there was crowned by the archbishop of Rouen with the crown of the dukes of Normandy.

In the years when John violated every law of God and man, and England lay under an interdict, some who remembered the obsequiousness of the king on Richard's death and his reiterated promises of good behaviour to the bishop of Lincoln, said it was all hypocrisy. But John, faithless, unfeeling and cruel, was, after his like, superstitious. Probably he

thought it well to have St Hugh and the nuns of Pontevrault on his side, as he thought it well to stick to his magic stone. It was policy, too, to be known as the friend of the holy bishop of Lincoln, especially with Arthur's mother, Constance, calling Brittany to arms, and to have the support of the clergy—until he could afford to do without it.

St Hugh on his way to the coast passed through a land troubled with disorder, and his companions, a very numerous body, including Gilbert Glanville, bishop of Rochester, were full of alarm. No sooner had they reached La Flèche than St Hugh went immediately to the church to say Mass.

Hardly was he in the sacristy when some of his servants rushed in with dreadful news. The magistrates of the town had seized all the carriages and thieves were taking the baggage mules. The bishop of Rochester and the rest of the clergy strongly advised St Hugh not to say Mass when the position was so serious. Let him be content to read a portion of the gospel and then consider what was to be done. Was it a time for Mass when danger threatened?

Not the slightest notice did St Hugh take of such counsel. He put on his vestments, all the vestments that a bishop should wear at the holy mysteries, and would have no shortened form, no curtailment of the ceremonies, but the solemn Mass appropriate for the day. A time of danger was no time for less devotion, that was certain; and in any case the bishop was not conscious of danger, for he was confident of the protection of God.

And sure enough, no sooner had the bishop finished Mass and taken off his vestments than the

magistrates were in the church full of abject apologies and prayers for forgiveness for the mistake that had been made. If his holiness would stay the night in their town he should be most safely guarded ; should his holiness prefer to continue his journey the magistrates would provide an escort. St Hugh accepted the escort and spoke graciously to the magistrates. The journey was resumed, and in the evening the bishop and his party reached the abbey of La Couture on the outskirts of Le Mans.

Here there was more trouble, for the town was hotly besieged by Constance and the supporters of Arthur who were in hopes of capturing John himself. (John, however, suspecting treachery, had slipped away in time from Le Mans.) St Hugh had risen at earliest dawn to say matins when a great noise and tumult of battle was heard ; one of his attendants burst in upon him with the news that the other prelates and clerks of their party had already fled from the town ; adding that if the bishop would cut short his office and leave the town before it was fully light it would be possible to get away in safety.

St Hugh waited calmly till his excited attendant had finished and then returned to his office. He said it in full without any abbreviation. As it happened, while his fellow-companions flying from the town got roughly handled by some of Arthur's supporters—and were even kept as prisoners for a season—the abbot of La Couture arrived and guided St Hugh by safe and little-known paths beyond the boundaries of Le Mans.

Horses and carriages and luggage were left behind

in the care of the abbot, but when Arthur's party took Le Mans and Constance found to whom these things belonged she at once had them sent on to St Hugh, begging at the same time for his prayers for herself and her son Arthur.

No further adventures befell the bishop of Lincoln on his homeward journey. He arrived safely in England, took part in the coronation of king John in Westminster abbey on Ascension Day, May 27th, A.D. 1199, and then travelled north to Lincoln.

XVIII

THE BISHOP'S LAST TRAVELS

NEVER was bishop received with greater joy by his people than was Hugh of Lincoln by the crowds gathered in every town he passed through on the way to his cathedral city. He came back bringing peace with him ; the honourable peace he had striven for ; peace to the diocese and freedom from the unjust demands of kings. His people welcomed him as conqueror, returning in triumph. The enthusiasm at Lincoln reminded the elders of the city of the excitement that had greeted the bishop on his first arrival to be enthroned, fourteen years before.

Once more the round of diocesan duties was resumed, the burden of that strenuous twelfth-century life, with its long journeys on horseback from Thames to Humber, taken up.

It was, perhaps, in the summer of 1199 that the incident of the shearing of Martin the sacristan occurred.

Martin was the sacristan of the bishop's private chapel at Lincoln. A vain youth, yet with hankering for religion, he defied the canon law that ordered all clerks, even in minor orders, to wear their hair short and to be tonsured. One day the bishop noticed the young man's flowing locks, and,

being the disciplinarian he was, said firmly they must be cut off, since the ecclesiastical law so ordered it. Martin meant to obey, for he felt drawn to the religious life, but somehow he let the days go by and remained uncropped. Three days in fact elapsed. Then the bishop, vexed at the disobedience, sent for a pair of shears when Mass was over, and made the sacristan sit down while he cut his hair. Martin having decided to become a monk suffered no regrets for the loss of his beautiful hair. What surprised him was that the bishop, instead of expressing immediate approval of the decision to enter a monastery, said not a word to him on the subject for three whole days. Thus was the three days' disobedience purged. The bishop, now convinced of the young man's sincerity, sent him to the prior of St Neot's in Huntingdonshire. This priory of St Neot's was a dependency of the famous abbey of Bec in Normandy, and Martin eventually went to Bec and became an exemplary monk, a credit in every way to the monastery.

In the autumn St Hugh went down to Somerset to make a retreat at Witham. It was his farewell visit to the priory. On his last night the wooden buildings—and St Hugh had often warned the community against the danger of these wooden structures—caught fire. St Hugh, because he intended to start very early next morning, was in the lay-brother's house; he had just risen from sleep to go into church for the night office when some of the monks broke in upon his prayers with the alarming news that the kitchen, which was nothing more than a wooden shed, was in flames. The danger was lest

the fire should spread to the guest-house, with its timber roof, to the cells of the lay-brothers, which were also of wood, or even to the church itself.

St Hugh looked upon the fire and several times made the sign of the cross in its direction. Then silently he entered the church and prostrate before the altar was absorbed in prayer. He was still at prayer when the monks came to tell him that the shed had been burnt to the ground but that the fire had done no further damage. As the bishop over and over again had advised the pulling down of this old shed, and no one was sorry it was destroyed, with whole-hearted thankfulness the monks praised God that the fire had spared the church and other buildings. It was to the prayers of St Hugh they attributed their deliverance.

All that St Hugh said was : ‘ God be praised ! Not only has He saved us from present peril, He has removed a great cause of danger in the future.’

And with that he bade good-bye to the charter-house of Witham in Somerset where he had once been prior. He was not to see it again ; but this the monks did not know.

St Hugh’s deep longing to revisit his old home, the priory in the high valley of La Grande Chartreuse, was gratified the following year when king John invited him to witness the signing of the treaty of peace between England and France at Andely in Normandy. Archbishop Hubert, as busy as ever over public affairs, willingly gave his suffragan extended leave of absence.

Before St Hugh left Lincoln in the spring of 1200 he went out to his manor of Stow Park. Then it was

the swan, always on previous occasions so full of happy excitement, was utterly cast down and dispirited.

No responsibility must be attached to the bishop of Lincoln for the terms of the treaty of Andely. John and Philip Augustus of France made peace for their own ends and the peace did not endure. St Hugh always refused to engage in state-craft and always sought to discourage his fellow bishops from political activities. He understood in that twelfth century that 'political questions are mainly decided by political expediency and only indirectly and under circumstances fall into the province of theology.'²⁰ The treaty of Andely brought peace to the harassed peasantry—that was the great thing ; the war was over and would not be restarted while St Hugh lived. The treaty of Andely also arranged the betrothal of Blanche of Castile, aged twelve, the granddaughter of Henry II, with Louis the dauphin of France who was a few months older. Of that union St Louis was born.

St Hugh did not negotiate the treaty of Andely, neither did he pronounce judgment on its conditions. But he blessed the peace and prayed that happiness might ensue. The treaty was signed on May 22nd, 1200, the royal wedding followed next day. St Hugh was now free to depart south.

He lingered in Paris for a few days to worship at the abbey of St Denis, and on the news of his arrival came a crowd of learned clerks to pay their respects to one who was to be called 'scholarum consultor,' an oracle of the schools. The university students also thronged the bishop, cheering boisterously ; to

receive in return greetings of affection, embraces and words of blessing ; for St Hugh was moved by this welcome and by the ardour of these young men to approach him. He was persuaded to prolong his stay in Paris ; numerous ecclesiastics called to pay him attentions, and prince Louis of France (afterwards Louis VIII) and prince Arthur, duke of Brittany, also called on him. To both these boys St Hugh spoke very tenderly, advising them wisely on the conduct of princes. Arthur resented being urged to keep the peace with his uncle John, king of England. He could not foresee, the headstrong boy, as the bishop foresaw, that a contest with John would bring disaster and death.

Prince Louis was delighted with St Hugh and would have it that the old man must come and see his girl-bride, Blanche of Castile. Blanche never forgot this visit from the bishop of Lincoln and years after would tell her son, St Louis of France, how St Hugh of Lincoln had called upon her when she was a girl of twelve and just betrothed.

Between Paris and Troyes on the journey south St Hugh halted at the village of Jouy, and according to his custom invited the parish priest to dine with him. The latter, an old man of venerable appearance, excused himself from dining and was too shy to speak directly to the bishop when he arrived later to pay his respects. But he explained with emotion to some of the bishop's chaplains that in the parish church, carefully enshrined, was a miraculous Host, reddened as if with blood, and that this Host had become as it were flesh-coloured when he had been saying Mass many years ago. Would the bishop

and his clergy all come to the church to venerate this most sacred Host, this treasure ?

The chaplains passed on the message to St Hugh who, instead of showing any curiosity, or expressing any enthusiasm at the alleged miracle, asked coldly : ' Why should they want to see what after all was no more than a token of want of faith ? Those who with faith saw daily at Mass this miracle had no need to use the eyes in their head to see the body of Christ in the eucharist.'

When St Hugh had sent the old priest away with his blessing he positively forbade his clergy to gratify their curiosity by a visit to the church. ' No, no,' he said. ' When our belief is a matter of faith alone it is much stronger and higher than anything that depends on what we see with our bodily eyes.'

At Troyes as they were leaving the town a most wretched-looking man came up to the bishop's party and cried piteously for mercy. St Hugh waited to hear his story.

The man had once been steward of Brackley in Northamptonshire, a manor that belonged to the earl of Leicester. It was when the bishop was in Normandy in 1199 that a robber, pursued by the earl of Leicester's men, had taken refuge in Brackley church ; and from this sanctuary had been dragged away and hanged. (The earl of Leicester stood so high in the favour of king Richard and was withal so brave a man that he and his servants were very apt to take the law into their own hands.) Of course when St Hugh came back to England and heard of this violation of sanctuary in his diocese, he at once imposed a heavy penance on all who had been

concerned in the outrage. They were to go barefoot to the grave of the dead man, dig up the corpse and bury it in Brackley churchyard. Then they were to be given so many lashes by the clergy of Brackley, and after that to go barefoot to Lincoln, and in every church in Lincoln they were to receive stripes from the clergy. Only by the performance of this severe and humiliating penance could they escape excommunication. Better stripes and going barefoot—though it was winter-time—than excommunication, said the earl's men. To be put outside the church by the bishop of Lincoln was to be finished in this world and the next. The earl's men did their penance, and were forgiven. All except the steward, who took flight across the water to Normandy and sought his master. So far from the earl of Leicester welcoming his steward of Brackley, the earl cursed him for a fool and dismissed him in disgrace. Now penniless and friendless, the unhappy man was left to wander a beggar in a strange land. In his hour of bitter need the steward appealed to St Hugh for pardon. Thankfully would he perform any penance that the bishop imposed. The heart of St Hugh was touched by the abject misery of the poor wretch pleading before him, and he freely forgave him. The steward with peace once more in his soul agreed cheerfully to the conditions that accompanied the pardon.

Before he reached Grenoble St Hugh stopped at the monastery of St Antoine where the body of the much-venerated St Anthony, the father of the monks of the desert, is preserved. At the hospice he saw the many sufferers from the terrible sickness known as

'the sacred fire' restored to health by the prayers of St Anthony ; and the monks also showed him a number of castles that had been struck by lightning because their owners had ill-treated the pilgrims to St Antoine.²¹

All Grenoble was *en fête* when St Hugh arrived there on the morning of June 24, the feast of St John the Baptist, patron saint of the Carthusian order. The whole city, headed by the bishop, Jean de Sassenage, the same bishop who had said that Hugh the procurator must leave the Grande Chartreuse and become prior of Witham, went out to meet him.

In the cathedral St Hugh sang the High Mass and preached—moving all who heard him to tears. His brothers, William of Avalon and Peter, were present and St Hugh was called upon to christen a small nephew, to whom the bishop of Grenoble stood godfather.

At daybreak next day St Hugh with his companions took the road to the Grande Chartreuse, and as the mountain paths narrowed they all dismounted and pursued the way on foot. Fatigue sat lightly on St Hugh that day. His heart was lifted up when he saw once more the place he had loved in youth. 'This is my rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it,' he had said with the psalmist ; and in spirit he had always dwelt there.

When St Hugh reached the cloister, the monks, led by their prior, dom Jancelin,* awaited him, and with a great welcome was he received.

For three weeks St Hugh stayed at the Grande

* Prior of La Grande Chartreuse for fifty-three years, 1180–1233.

Chartreuse, and though he sought to live the Carthusian life in its peace and silence there were far too many calls upon his time, far too many visitors to be interviewed, to make that possible. He lived as a monk, rising for the night office and taking his part in the daily routine. But bishops and important laymen came to see him and could not be turned away. Among the former was dom Nanthelmus, the Carthusian prince-bishop of Geneva, who for twelve years had been kept out of his diocese by William, count of Geneva. In an old quarrel of church and state, the perennial question of secular and spiritual authority, the bishop had done no more than stand up for the liberties of the church as St Hugh had done. Now count William being dangerously ill, the moment seemed ripe for peace. So St Hugh dictated a message urging the count to be reconciled with his bishop while there was time ; and this he sent by two Carthusian priors. Count William gruffly bid the messengers be off ; he declined all intercourse with these ambassadors. Nevertheless he pondered the message of St Hugh and presently repented. Before count William died, reconciled to the church, the bishop of Geneva had returned to his cathedral.

For a few days St Hugh stayed with his old friends the lay-brothers, and to their house came the peasants and the poor who recollected the procurator of twenty-five years back. They found him curiously unchanged, though he seemed a very old man and frail.

At last the hour came to depart, and as a present on leaving St Hugh handed over to the father

sacristan, in the presence of dom Jancelin and the monks, the one possession he valued above all else—a collection of sacred relics in a silver reliquary.

St Hugh had great love for relics of the saints and had been an ardent collector. At times indeed his methods shocked the more scrupulous. At Fecamp Abbey, for instance, when St Hugh was shown what was believed to be a bone of St Mary Magdalen, he had boldly, after kissing the sacred relic, bitten off a piece to add to his collection. The ecclesiastics who saw what the bishop had done remonstrated with him for not treating the sacred relic with greater reverence. But St Hugh wouldn't have it. He told them no relic was as sacred as the body and blood of Christ which he touched daily with his hands and with his teeth every time he said Mass.

From the mountains of La Grande Chartreuse St Hugh passed to linger for a day or two at the Cluniac priory of Domene, which is close to Grenoble, to revisit the canons regular at their priory of Villarbenoit where his boyhood had been spent, and to stay a night with brother William at Avalon. To the canons regular St Hugh gave an exceedingly beautiful copy of the Bible, valued at ten silver marks. A visit to his first parish was included. And at St Maximin the old people were proud to recognize their youthful vicar, for they had said all along that he was a saint.

Then came the journey north through Belley, Cluny, Citeaux, Clairvaux, Reims, Val-Saint-Pierre to Wissant.

This journey to the coast was a pilgrimage for St Hugh ; his stopping-places were the tombs of saints ;

he was drawn to the holiness of men who yet walked the earth. But it was hard going for the body, this travel, and the discomforts were fatal.

At Belley, in the cathedral, there was the tomb of the Carthusian St Anthelmus, an early prior of the Grande Chartreuse, to be venerated ; and a portion of one of the hands of St John the Baptist. When St Hugh examined the latter he cut off a piece of the material that lined the reliquary and was allowed to keep it as a memento of his visit. Not far from Belley was the Carthusian priory of Arvieres, built among the rocks and mountains of the Grand Colombier. Here St Artaud had retired. Pope Alexander III had dragged this holy man away from the monastic life when he was prior of Arvieres and made him bishop of Belley, chiefly because of his efforts to end the schism of the anti-pope Octavian. At ninety St Artaud had been given permission to return to his monastery, and he was now nearly a hundred years old when they told him Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, was in the neighbourhood. Off went a messenger to St Hugh with word that Artaud greatly longed to see him. And St Hugh did not hesitate when the message reached him but followed his guide, climbing the rocks till he reached the charterhouse. The two Carthusian bishops talked together of the things of God, temporal and eternal. St Artaud thought it would be a good thing if St Hugh told the monks of the peace between France and England that had been signed at Andely, it meant so much to everybody that war no longer devastated the land. St Hugh thought otherwise. It was necessary, no doubt, for bishops to tell and

be told of the events taking place in the world, but the peace of the enclosure need not be broken. Would his dear lord and father wish him to leave the busy haunts of men in order to carry news to the desert? St Artaud understood. This wonderful old man outlived St Hugh by six years, dying in 1206 at the age of one hundred and five.

St Hugh's next halting-place was at Cluny, and here he stayed three days. The traveller needed rest and the black monks of Cluny were very dear to the Carthusians. Many ties bound the two orders together, and Adam, the bishop of Lincoln's chaplain, was a Benedictine of the Cluniac rule. Before he left this famous abbey of Cluny with its many recent memories of Peter the Venerable, St Hugh said graciously to the monks who gathered round him: 'In truth if I had come here before my heart was drawn to my beloved charterhouse I should have been a monk of Cluny.'

From Cluny the road lay to Cîteaux, the monastery of the Cistercian reform. St Hugh's love for the Cistercians dated from the time when old St Peter of Tarentaise made him his companion at the Grande Chartreuse. As with the Cluniac monks so with the Cistercians, many ties held them to the Carthusians.

On the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady (August 15) St Hugh said Mass in the abbey church at Cîteaux and later in the day set off for the Carthusian priory at Lugni, near Chatillon-sur-Seine. Thence he took the road to Clairvaux; partly from devotion to its great abbot, St Bernard, partly because Jean de Bellesmes, after being bishop of Poitiers and then for ten years archbishop of Lyons,

and now living in retirement at Clairvaux, particularly wished to see him. Archbishop Jean had stood up to kings in his day ; he had tried to reconcile Henry II with St Thomas of Canterbury, for the latter was his friend—but that was in the long past. With St Hugh he talked of the books of the Bible, and to the question which was his favourite book, answered the Book of Psalms. It had a charm, said the archbishop, this book, which never staled. ‘ Constantly I meditate upon its words and my mind and my soul are alike refreshed.’

A few days were spent at Clairvaux and then St Hugh rested for two days at the Carthusian monastery of Mont-Dieu at Reims, on the river Bar, where St Thomas of Canterbury and John of Salisbury had stayed. Both the prior of Mont Dieu and the prior of the Carthusian monastery of Val-Saint-Pierre, in the forest of Tierache, Laon diocese, St Hugh’s next stopping-place, had written to Henry II on behalf of St Thomas. At Mont Dieu the sight of the many manuscripts in the monastic library stirred St Hugh to lament the idleness of a degenerate age that would no longer copy or compose books that were of lasting value, the listlessness that would not read the books that were written, and the want of sense that would not even take care of the books that existed.

Instead of going immediately to Wissant and taking ship for England St Hugh turned aside to Saint-Omer. Sickness had overtaken him ; the many weeks of travel through the hot summer months had worn him out. Medical opinion advised bleeding, and the proposed remedy made the disease worse. For three days the patient turned

from all food with bitter distaste. Then he rallied, and on September 7 went to the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais, which was hard by Saint Omer. At his own request St Hugh went to the infirmary, where the monks tended him with the utmost care and devotion.

On the morrow, which was the birthday of Our Lady, St Hugh was well enough to sing Mass, and feeling better he returned to the town. He proceeded to Wissant on September 9, and the following day, the wind being favourable, sailed for England, where he arrived on the morning of September 10.

XIX

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ST HUGH

ILL as he was, St Hugh, with fast unbroken, went to church at Dover and there said Mass. It was the last time he was to celebrate the holy mysteries, to offer the holy sacrifice. For two months more the flame of life flickered ; to the wonder of many that death so long delayed his coming. The bishop of Lincoln was a dying man, and knew it, when he landed in England on that fair September morning.

Nor did he ask that it should be otherwise when he knelt in prayer on the next day at the shrine of St Thomas in Canterbury cathedral.

So far from gaining relief from pain at that sacred spot, St Hugh was perceptibly worse when the journey to London was resumed.

But it cheered him to learn from the prior and monks of Canterbury that the long dispute between the chapter and archbishop Hubert was amicably settled. Pope Innocent III had appointed St Hugh papal delegate, with orders to bring about a reconciliation ; and St Hugh had deputed Roger of Rolleston, dean of Lincoln, to act on his behalf during the absence in France. The bishop of Ely and abbot Sampson of St Edmunds served with the

dean of Lincoln as papal commissioners and the terms they proposed were acceptable to both parties.²²

The king's judges and other important men who were in Canterbury at the time, hearing of St Hugh's arrival, came swiftly to pay their respects. They were shocked, and unable to hide their distress, on seeing the bishop so ill. To console them St Hugh, without faltering, said : ' Very sweet to His servants are the crosses sent by their Lord.'

To his chaplains who tried to persuade him to seek some remedy for the weakness of the eyes—the dust and heat of travel had gravely weakened his sight—the bishop would only reply : ' It is not worth while ; for these eyes of mine will last me as long as I shall need them.'

In order to reach London in time for the episcopal synod that archbishop Hubert had called for September 19, the time in Canterbury was shortened. St Hugh was in London by the eighteenth, but the journey on horseback and by boat left him feverish and too weak for public business. His attendants bore him to the house of the bishops of Lincoln in Holborn,* and there they put him to bed. He was in pain in every limb, and in high fever, yet perfectly conscious. He listened to the prayers for his recovery said by all who tended him, and said gently when they prayed specially that God would restore

* This house stood beyond Holborn Bars. It was formerly the property of the Knights Templars. They sold it to the bishop of Lincoln when they removed to the new Temple east of Temple Bar. The site of Lincoln House is now covered by Southampton Buildings, west of Staple Inn. See Thurston : *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 534.

him to health for the sake of the people of his diocese : ‘ My dear children in Christ Jesus, you may be sure that always shall I be near them, if not in body, at least in spirit. But as to whether I get well and return to Lincoln—that’s all in God’s hands. I wish for nothing but that God’s holy will be done.’

To Adam, his chaplain, the bishop spoke next day of the foreboding he had of evils coming to England. ‘ I see clearly that terrible misfortunes are about to fall on the church in this land. And still my friends, however spiritually minded, want to keep me in this world which is always a place of suffering for me.’

St Matthew’s Day, September 21, was the anniversary of his consecration as a bishop and St Hugh decided that he must now receive the viaticum and be anointed with the oil of the sick. So after making a general confession of all his sins from boyhood the holy eucharist was brought to him. St Hugh rose up from bed and knelt down to adore his Lord. The sacred Host was placed upon his lips. A short time after he was anointed. Strengthened by the sacrament of extreme unction, St Hugh said cheerfully to his attendants : ‘ Physicians and diseases may now do their worst with me, for I care little for either of them. God Himself has come to me ; I trusted to Him and I have received Him. I will hold Him and cleave to Him for ever.’

But the fever grew worse and the bishop’s friends begged him to make his will ; it was the custom, they pointed out.

‘ It’s not a custom I like,’ said the bishop, ‘ although the church sanctions it. Well, then, I

declare, once for all, that I never have possessed anything and that I do not now possess anything, save that which belongs to the church and not to me. However, as it is possible that the property of my bishopric may be unjustly seized after I am dead by the treasury unless I have otherwise disposed of it, I hereby leave everything which I appear to possess to our Lord Jesus Christ in the person of His poor.'

Then the bishop appointed Roger, dean of Lincoln, and two archdeacons of the diocese, to distribute to the poor all that he might possess at death, and calling for his stole he solemnly pronounced sentence of excommunication on all who should violate his dying wishes, either by depriving the poor of their inheritance or obstructing the executors in the fulfilment of their task.

King John visited the dying bishop and stayed a long time at his bedside, dismissing his courtiers that the chamber of the sick might not be crowded. St Hugh expressed no pleasure at the visit, though John vowed that he would faithfully carry out everything that was required, and gave many promises that the last wishes of the bishop should be thoroughly respected. St Hugh knew the king for a shifty creature, without the finer qualities of Henry of Anjou or Richard Cœur de Lion.

Another visitor at Lincoln House was the archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Hubert's regard for St Hugh was genuine and profound, but he felt that the holy prelate had not always treated him fairly. On so many occasions his suffragan had openly gone counter to the archbishop's policy, and it seemed to Hubert that now was the time for some

demonstration of regret, some sign to the public that in past differences the archbishop was not always wrong. If the bishop of Lincoln would but admit that at times he had not treated the primate fairly it would also give archbishop Hubert a personal satisfaction. Archbishop Hubert put it squarely to St Hugh : Did not my lord of Lincoln think that an act of contrition was due for past opposition to the archbishop ? Would he not ask forgiveness of the archbishop for having thwarted him so many times ?

St Hugh's reply was an uncompromising No.

'It is certainly true,' he said, 'that when I examine my conscience I find that I have vexed you many times. But far from being sorry for this I am only sorry that I have not vexed you more often. If God spares my life I tell you now in His presence that I am firmly resolved to speak out more plainly in the future. I have shown cowardice in not having said to you all that I ought to have said because I was afraid of displeasing you. I accuse myself of having feared your anger more than the anger of our Father in heaven, and for this I do indeed ask your forgiveness. My silence, so unworthy of a bishop, and so productive of evil, has made me guilty, not only before God, but guilty to your paternity, as primate of the church in England.'

Archbishop Hubert made no reply. He had always found the bishop of Lincoln impractical. His suffragan, no doubt, was a saint ; and therefore an impossible person. His brother of Lincoln's way of looking at things was beyond him. Who could deal with so inflexible a man ?

On another day while St Hugh was calmly pre-

paring for death one of his friends asked him if he were conscious of ever having shown favouritism in his judicial decisions. Had he ever allowed feelings of private affection or personal resentment to warp his judgments?

Without hesitation the bishop answered that he could not remember a single occasion on which he had knowingly swerved from justice. 'I do not believe,' he added, 'that love or hate, hope or fear, have ever had any weight with me for or against those brought before my tribunal. If I have ever given an unjust decision it has been either through ignorance or because the case was not properly stated to me.'

At the bishop's words joy and astonishment fell upon the hearers. So rare and wonderful was this confession of justice.

Physicians sought to be of service; but the only advice they could give was that the patient should eat meat. St Hugh, a total abstainer from all flesh-foods from the day he entered the Grande Chartreuse, was quite unwilling to break the Carthusian rule even when archbishop Hubert backed up the medical men and told him to eat meat. However, the prior of Witham wrote that the bishop should not be scrupulous when it came to obeying the archbishop, and St Hugh yielded.

'It won't cure me, this flesh-meat, and it won't do me any good,' said St Hugh. 'It's entirely against my own will, and only because I must not cause scandal by disobeying the archbishop, that I agree to do what I am told. I sincerely wish to imitate Him, who for our sakes was obedient even unto

death. Therefore, bring me the food you have prepared and I shall take it with the seasoning of your fraternal charity.'

For the first and last time in his Carthusian life St Hugh broke the rule of abstinence. He could hardly eat more than a mouthful and, as he had said, the meat did him no good.

As for other dispensations permitted under the Carthusian rule to the sick and infirm, St Hugh refused them all. He would give up neither the hair shirt nor the habit of the order ; explaining to his chaplain that the hair shirt soothed far more than it chafed him. It helped him to bear pain, he said, instead of increasing it.

He continued to say the divine office night and day at the proper hours, utterly disregarding the fever that consumed him, and even tried to join vocally in the psalms which his clergy recited. His soul was lifted in prayer and as death came nearer St Hugh became more absorbed in contemplation.

One person alone troubled the dying bishop and that was his house-steward, who had the ill-omened name of Pontius. St Hugh had raised Pontius to this office. He had found him a beggar, destitute, homeless, and had taken him into his household. Pontius resented the kindness and hated the charity that had brought him comfort. He was one of the very few men utterly uninfluenced by contact with St Hugh, and now that his master was reduced to but a shadow of his former self and was plainly approaching the grave, Pontius became more and more aggressive. In fact, from the day St Hugh fell sick at Saint Omer the house-steward had asserted

himself with increasing insolence. Ask pardon when he offended he would not. 'I am much more necessary to the bishop than the bishop is to me,' was the answer he gave when reproached for ingratitude. His rancour pursued the bishop beyond the grave, for the house-steward declined to provide the very necessities for the burial of St Hugh. And all because of the charity he had received.

The ill-conditioned fellow came to a bad end. Three times Pontius fell into the hands of robbers, and finally he died at Angers in Normandy in bitter pain and misery.

Death had no terrors for St Hugh. Frequently had he reminded mourners in past years that it would be a terrible thing if we had to live for ever ; adding his burlesque oath, 'by the holy nut,' *per sanctum nucem*, to lighten the words. And now death had come for him and he was ready to depart. October passed and it was announced that the English bishops and the barons were going to Lincoln to meet the king of Scotland, William the Lion, who in that city would do homage to the king of England.

St Hugh, a fortnight before he died, wrote to Geoffrey the architect of Lincoln cathedral explaining to him that above all the chapel of St John the Baptist should be finished before the great assembly of the baronage and episcopate. 'I earnestly desire the bishop of Rochester to consecrate the altar in that chapel,' wrote St Hugh. 'I hoped to have consecrated this altar myself, but God has decided otherwise ; now my only anxiety is that it should be consecrated before my arrival, for I shall certainly be at Lincoln on the day of the assembly.'

To his own clergy St Hugh confided his personal desire to be buried in this chapel of St John the Baptist. 'Lay me there,' he said, 'where you can conveniently find room, and somewhere close to the wall. Don't let my tomb block up the way, as tombs do in so many churches ; and are like traps, so that the unwary stumble over them.'

St Hugh prayed that he might die on St Martin's Day, November 11, but it was not till the sixteenth that death took him.

The physicians, amazed that he lived so long, now talked of a possible recovery. 'It is the spirit of this man that keeps him alive,' they said. In truth they were quite helpless and could do nothing.

Tortured with pain those last few days, so that he cried out continually to his Saviour for rest, St Hugh gave to his attendant clergy his last instructions. A bed of ashes was to be prepared on the floor, according to the Carthusian custom, and on these ashes, blessed and sprinkled with holy water, he was to be laid when they saw he was dying. Again he reminded them of his wish to be buried in the chapel of St John the Baptist in Lincoln cathedral, and then he told them to clothe him when he was dead in the vestments he wore on the day he was consecrated bishop. 'They are quite plain, from the mitre to the sandals, and I have kept them all these years that I might be buried in them.' A gold ring of no special value which also had been worn at his consecration was to be left on his finger. 'I chose these things for their plainness,' the bishop said, 'that all my life they might teach me to be humble

of heart ; after I am dead they will not tempt the avaricious to rob me.'

He received the Blessed Sacrament for the last time on November 15. That night his chaplain in a dream saw a wonderful pear tree, large and marvellously beautiful, lying on the ground in the garden of the bishop's house in Holborn. On awaking he told his fellow clergy of this vision : ' I am sure our bishop will die to-day, for he is the beautiful pear tree of my dream.'

The physicians said it was nonsense, that the bishop was getting better ; nevertheless the chaplain made the necessary preparations for death. Prime and the other day hours of the divine office were recited by his clergy at St Hugh's bedside, and when the dusk fell he asked them to send for the prior of Westminster and the dean of St Paul's, for he knew the last hour had come. Placing his hand on his chaplain's head the bishop blessed him and all his flock ; he continued praying aloud for all his spiritual children till his voice sank to a whisper.

One of his clergy standing by said : ' Pray God to send a worthy pastor to your widowed church.' And this he said three times, for it seemed St Hugh did not hear him. At last St Hugh answered, ' God grant it.' And those were the last words he said. It was dark now. The November night had fallen. The day's work was over, the night when no man should work had come. But for St Hugh the night was far spent and the day was at hand.

The clergy made the bed of ashes on the floor, in the form of a cross. The dying man raised his hand and blessed the ashes. The clergy were saying

compline when the change in the bishop's countenance told them that the end was near. St Hugh made a sign, and very tenderly his chaplains lifted the worn-out body and placed it on the ashes above the bare ground. Peacefully and quietly the bishop gave up his soul to God. It was just when they had reached *Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine* that he died, Thursday, November 16, A.D. 1200.

On that same night of St Hugh's death, Richard, the archdeacon of Northampton, saw in a dream St Hugh ascending to heaven in glory ; he also in the same dream saw one of the bishop's chaplains, Robert of Capella, following him. Robert, a clerk of great holiness and largeness of heart, was in Lincoln at the time, and falling dangerously ill, died on the day St Hugh's body was brought to the cathedral.

The instructions left by St Hugh were strictly obeyed. His body was embalmed and clothed in the pontifical vestments he had reserved for his burying. From all London came citizens to the lying-in-state in the chapel in Holborn, weeping and lamenting the death of the good bishop. The office for the dead was chanted, the High Mass of requiem solemnly sung.

On Saturday, November 18, the funeral procession left London. Through Hertford, Biggleswade, Buckden, Stamford, Ancaster to the city of Lincoln set on a hill they bore the body to its resting-place.

Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land.

With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,

With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads.

With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices
 rising strong and solemn,
 With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around
 the coffin.

In every town and village the people thronged the coffin, and in death was the healing touch of their bishop still present. They said at Biggleswade that a man whose arm was broken in the press of the crowd at the church door, was healed in the night by St Hugh himself while the man slept.

At Stamford a pious shoemaker, known to all the town for his good works and holy living, prayed that he might be allowed but to touch the coffin and then be united with the soul of St Hugh in heaven. His prayer was granted ; for the crowd made way for the poor man, and that night he was taken suddenly ill ; the priest was sent for ; confession made and the last sacraments administered, he died in peace.

In Lincoln, kings, bishops and nobles were gathered for the assembly St Hugh had said he would attend. On the morning of November 23 they left the city to meet the funeral procession.

It was raining hard when archbishop Hubert, the archbishop of Dublin, Bernard, archbishop of Ragusa in Dalmatia, fourteen other bishops, one hundred abbots, king John, and William, king of Scotland, with princes and nobles, went out to do honour to the bishop of Lincoln at his last home-coming. Through the pouring rain and the muddy streets king John and men of high estate bore the coffin to the cathedral through the grief-stricken mourners, the weeping multitudes. ' With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang.'

The lamentations of the Jews for the loss of their friend were heard in every street. In sorrow they bewailed the death of him they called 'a true servant indeed of the great God.'

From the cathedral doors the archbishops and bishops brought the coffin to the sanctuary.

It was noticed when the body was uncovered to be re clothed in the vestments St Hugh had asked to be buried in, that though five days had passed since he died, the flesh 'shone like snow and had, as it were, the glory of a risen body.' Nothing livid, nothing discoloured marked the body of the saint. It had no appearance of a corpse ; for arms, hands and fingers were as supple and flexible as in life. A wonderful rose colour was on the face, and this remained until the entombment.

Several miracles of healing took place that day.

First the citizens came rushing to the dean with news that a blind woman had recovered her sight, and asking for the bells to be rung and a *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving. The dean and chapter demurred. The truth, they insisted, must be more clearly ascertained before they could take any notice of this enthusiastic tale. On examination there was ample evidence to prove that the woman had been blind of one eye for seven years and her sight was fully restored after touching the body of St Hugh.

A pickpocket in the crowd cut a purse from a lady of high rank and got away undetected. Hardly had he escaped than blindness fell upon him, so that he staggered about like a drunken man. Bystanders asked what was the matter. Then the man confessed his crime and the lady herself arrived to

identify the purse. The lady forgave him and all prayed to St Hugh for mercy on the afflicted man, who very quickly recovered his sight.

A knight of Lindsay, well known to the canons of Lincoln, had long been troubled by a cancerous growth in the arm. He placed the diseased member against the face of St Hugh and prayed in tears that he might be made whole. This limb, which the dean and chapter and other competent witnesses had seen in all its foulness, which the physicians had declared incurable, gradually healed; two days later not even a scar could be seen.²³

On November 24 the body of St Hugh was laid near the altar in the chapel of St John the Baptist, at the back of the high altar. And there it rested for eighty years till a translation to a more glorious shrine was effected. In great numbers came pilgrims to pray at that tomb of him who was described at his death by one John of Leicester, as :

*Pontificum baculus, monachorum norma, scholarum
consultor, regum malleus, Hugo fuit.*

Staff of bishops, rule for monks, oracle of scholars;
hammer of kings was Hugh.

They held him for a saint, bishop Hugh of Lincoln, the pilgrims; not doubting that as he had helped all who called on him when living so he would help them not the less when dead.

For a while John, the graceless king, was moved to better things by the remembrance of St Hugh, and showed kindness to the Carthusians and the Cistercians.

XX

CANONIZATION AND TRANSLATION

MIRACLE followed miracle at the tomb of St Hugh, so that in 1219, when king John had been three years dead and another Hugh, 'Hugh of Wells,' was bishop of Lincoln, a petition was sent to pope Honorius III, signed by the young king Henry III, a boy of twelve, and by the English bishops, for the canonization of the Carthusian monk whom Henry of Anjou had brought to England.

To this request pope Honorius graciously replied ; appointing cardinal Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Coventry, and John, the Cistercian abbot of Fountains (subsequently bishop of Ely), to hold an official court of enquiry and collect the necessary evidence. Every care must be taken, wrote the pope, to examine all that was brought forward concerning the life of the servant of God, 'the virtues he hath practised and the miracles attributed to him, both before and after his death.'

The commission promptly set to work. Witnesses were called, and numerous miracles attested.

Pope Honorius, the report of the commissioners duly read and submitted to the investigation of the

bishop of Salinae, declared himself satisfied. Hugh of Lincoln was proved a saint. The petition was granted. ' With the concurrence of our brethren and of the bishops summoned in council to the Holy See we have decided to enrol him in the catalogue of the saints ' ; thus pope Honorius sent word from Viterbo, where the bull of canonization was signed on February 17, A.D. 1220.

The miracles recorded are all miracles of healing ; miracles of St Hugh's lifetime, in many cases. Of the miracles attributed to St Hugh after his death, the first on the list is that of a small boy given up for dead. All night the mother in her distress stayed by the body of her child, and only at daybreak did she have faith that her boy would be restored to her at the intercession of St Hugh. Then she vowed to present a wax candle as tall as her child at the bishop's tomb. Presently the neighbours arrived to prepare for the funeral. But the faith of the mother was unshaken ; she prayed on and in a few minutes noticed a faint quivering of the eyelids and then a sigh. The child was alive. The mother gathered her boy in her arms. Two or three days later he, who had been given up for dead, was quite well.

The boy was seen by the commissioners when the evidence for the canonization was examined. Both father and mother swore to the truth of the story and two more witnesses supported it on oath.

Many paralysed persons, restored to health at the tomb of St Hugh, are mentioned in the report of the commissioners.

One young man, named John, paralysed for years

so that his lower limbs were useless, begged to be carried to the tomb of St Hugh that he might be healed. So they brought him there on the eve of the Assumption of Our Lady, and there he remained all night. In early morning he saw in a dream St Hugh, all radiant, with arms outstretched in blessing, and heard the words, 'arise and walk.' On that the young man did as he was bid and stood upright. He was a little shaky at first, but was soon able to walk and in a little while was completely cured. This young man, John, had been an inmate of the hospital in Lincoln for four years, and the miracle was attested by the sisters of the hospital. John continued to live in the city, and being very poor the canons helped him.

Two women, both paralytics, are mentioned. One, Alice, for years was at the cathedral door ; she could never move without help and was a well-known figure to everybody who entered the cathedral. On a certain day they carried her to the tomb, and with tears she prayed to be healed. In a few minutes the miracle happened. Alice could walk and give thanks for the use of her limbs.

Another woman was brought in a basket, her limbs doubled up by paralysis. For three years she had been so afflicted. They left her at the tomb in her basket, and, as in the case of the young man, John, she remained there all night. On awaking in the morning she felt as if all the sinews were being stretched ; her bones and joints cracked. Suddenly she found she could walk. The cure was complete. The two women who brought her to the cathedral, and two laymen, in whose house she had lodged all

the three years of her deformity, gave evidence that the paralysis vanished on that night.

Two blind men recovered sight, one a well-known mendicant, the other an inhabitant of Rothwell. The latter was but three weeks blind before he knelt at St Hugh's tomb and during Mass called out, 'I can see, I can see. I can see the candles burning that I brought in honour of the holy bishop.'

Matilda, a blind woman, whose friends always brought her to the cathedral every morning, was, while she besought St Hugh, given sight and, to the general astonishment, walked home by herself.

Nine who were insane were restored to reason ; two dumb persons found speech ; and victims of dropsy, quinsy and jaundice were cured. The list of the afflicted, proved miraculously healed to the satisfaction of the commissioners, contains more than thirty names.

That the good bishop continued after death his miraculous work of healing was the conviction of the people cured at his tomb. It was at the time the belief of Christendom that God gave to men and women of heroic sanctity, alive and dead, the power to work miracles. And that belief is still the faith of Catholics.

To Stephen Langton, cardinal archbishop, as to abbot John, the evidence of these cures was sufficient proof that a number of afflicted persons were miraculously healed at the tomb of Hugh, bishop of Lincoln.

Between the gaping credulity that swallows marvels as miracles at the suggestion of unscrupulous neighbours, to the profit of imposture—the credulity

St Hugh in his lifetime faced and overthrew at Northampton—and the invincible ignorance, rooted in prejudice, that insists miracles cannot happen, that what we call supernatural or preternatural simply does not occur, Stephen Langton took the plain, common sense, middle course. He asked for evidence, and on the evidence given he decided. In what other way can the truth of human events be decided? To explain *how* miracles happen was not required of the pope's commissioners. (Who can *explain* the works of God or measure His grace?) All that could be said was : here are certain men and women known by many to be blind who now see ; recognized for years as incapable of standing upright who now walk freely ; long mentally afflicted and now become reasonable. And in each case release from suffering followed an intercession to the holy bishop, Hugh.

The question of evidence is of first importance when the cause of a person of heroic virtue is promoted at Rome and canonization is sought. Miracles are evidence of sanctity and must be properly attested. Stephen Langton and abbot John, being eminently reasonable men, no fanatics but men of faith and sober mind, acted as the just must always act when called upon for a decision. They gave their verdict on the evidence presented and carefully sifted.

And the verdict given, Rome pronounced judgment.

Pope Honorius III, with the depositions placed before him, could hardly do otherwise than grant the petition of king Henry and the English episcopate.

Therefore, by virtue of his holy life, and the good deeds done in the body and the graces that flowed from him after the passage to the tomb, Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, was decreed a saint ; his feast to be observed for ever on November 17.

Next to St Bruno, the founder of the order, no saint ranks higher with the Carthusians than St Hugh of Lincoln. His feast is still kept in the diocese of Nottingham (which includes the counties of Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham and Rutland, once part of St Hugh's diocese of Lincoln) and by the order of canons regular.

Sixty years later, in October, A.D. 1280, the relics of St Hugh were translated with full solemnity to the new shrine erected in the ' Angel Choir ', as it came to be called. ' At whose translation were present the lord king (Edward I) and the queen (Eleanor of Castile), with their children ; also the lord archbishop (John Peckham the Franciscan), with seven bishops and six abbots and a very large multitude of people seeking the protection of the aforesaid saint. In whose tomb was found no small quantity of oil, and through its merits very many miracles were performed at that spot.'

When the marble tomb of St Hugh was opened, the body which had lain in it for eighty years was found hardly changed and without blemish. On the archbishop lightly laying his hand upon the head of St Hugh the head immediately fell away from the shoulders. This head, subsequently encased in a reliquary of gold and silver ornamented with precious stones, was placed close by the altar of St John Baptist, near the shrine where the body was enclosed.

The shrine, resplendent with gold and silver, richly bejewelled, was built on a pedestal of marble and riveted to the stonework. It was the glory of the Angel Choir. For Lincoln had no other saint than Hugh its bishop ; though Edward I, in the year of his death, 1307, wrote to Baldock, bishop of Lincoln and lord chancellor, commanding him to petition the pope to have Robert Grosteste canonized.

King and queen, bishops and nobles, and the vast concourse of people, they left the mortal remains of St Hugh of Lincoln enshrined in the cathedral he had started to build. To multitudes was this shrine the dearest spot in the minster church of Our Lady, in the city set on the hill.

For more than two hundred and fifty years came pilgrims to the tomb of the great bishop, holy St Hugh of Lincoln. They came with clear faith and strong assurance that he who helped mankind during the time of his mortal life still held in love all who called on him for help and would not turn them away.

EPILOGUE

NEITHER head nor body of St Hugh was left in peace. The precautions taken by the bishop to escape the hand of the spoiler were frustrated by the pious desire to do him honour. In vain had St Hugh on his death-bed asked to be buried with a plainness that would not incite the covetous to plunder his tomb. That tomb became famous for the wealth of treasure it displayed. The shrine of St Hugh shone gloriously with the countless offerings lavished upon it. Till, Judas-like, an avaricious and envious king cried out against the waste.

The skull in its golden reliquary went first. It was wrenched off and removed. This was in the troubled times of the fourteenth century, a period of social unrest, when the peasant revolt was brewing after the black death had ravaged the land. Over England wandered restless starving men. A band of robbers entered the cathedral of Lincoln, A.D. 1364, carried off the reliquary, and beyond the city, stripping off the gold and silver and precious stones, left the skull on the ground. With their treasure the robbers went to London, where they sold it for twenty marks. The bad business did not prosper. For the robbers themselves were robbed of the money they had received, and shame and remorse overtook them at the thought of the base-

ness of their deed. Distracted by the sense of guilt, the robbers finally surrendered to justice and, confessing their crime, were hanged at Lincoln. The skull was discovered in a field outside the city and being identified was restored to its place beside the shrine.

The second robbery, carried out by order of king Henry VIII, was on a larger scale and no restoration followed, nor any remorse. Shrines enriched with votive offerings attracted the cupidity of Henry. They meant money ; money to gratify the taste for luxury. The spectacle of gold and silver and sparkling stones aroused a lust to possess that would take no denial. In 1540 a royal commission was appointed to undo the work of Stephen Langton and the pope's commission. King Henry, but recently by papal decree 'defender of the faith,' was, it appeared, shocked at the devotion paid to St Hugh, finding 'the simple people be much deceived and brought into great superstition and idolatry to the dishonour of God and great slander of this realm and peril of their own souls.'

Therefore were royal commissioners bidden 'to take down as well the said shrine and superstitious reliquaries, as superfluous jewels, plate, copes and other such like as you shall think by your wisdom not meet to continue and remain there. . . . And to see the said reliquaries, jewels and plate safely and surely to be conveyed to our Tower of London unto our jewel house there, charging the master of our jewels with the same.'

Most efficiently they did their job, these royal commissioners—at the head of them a Catholic

dignitary, Dr. George Hennage, archdeacon of Taunton—and the spoil was great. No threat of excommunication was uttered by John Longland, last bishop of Lincoln of the ‘old religion,’ to hinder the king’s servants.

The value of the plunder from the shrine was put down at 2621 ounces of gold, 4215 ounces of silver, and pearls and precious stones in great number and very costly.²⁴ All safely brought to the Tower of London on June 26, A.D. 1540.

The body of St Hugh and his skull were ignored. King Henry had no use for relics of saints and no respect for the dead. It was money he wanted and the things that money could buy. Bishop Longland, dean and chapter, canons and cathedral staff, raised no protest while the work of destruction went on, but silently stood aside ; nor did they intervene to preserve from dishonour the dear earthly remains of bishop Hugh. (Many times had St Hugh hastened to give Christian burial to the dead, and now there was none to give burial to his dust.) Skull and body were lost and crumbled. No man can say what happened to them when the shrine was destroyed. Anglican bishop Fuller erected a monument to St Hugh in 1670 and in a set of ‘elegiac verses of much elegance’ announced that St Hugh was buried near at hand. But when excavations were made in Lincoln cathedral in 1887 and the leaden coffin, encased in a stone coffin, which should have held the remains of St Hugh, was opened, it contained nothing human—only fragments of silken thread and scraps of flax.

The body of St Hugh perished at the hands of the

destroyer. His name liveth for evermore. (The name of Hugh, bishop, is also inscribed in the kalendar of the Church of England. Not in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI or Elizabeth, but in the revised Prayer Book of 1604 was the name of St Hugh inserted. No like honour has the Church of England conferred on St Anselm or St Thomas of Canterbury.)

When 'the red rain fell at Tyburn' in 1535, and the London Carthusians, persecuted and martyred because they could not believe that not the pope but the king of England was head of the church, died without flinching for the old faith of England, the orders of religion were doomed. One by one the charterhouses were dissolved, their inhabitants dismissed. The monks of Witham quietly surrendered their house on the demand of the king and, awarded small pensions, were ejected ; to pass from history and the remembrance of man. The first charterhouse in England, the house St Hugh had built in the woods of Somerset, was dissolved ; its stones employed for other purposes. Only the house of the lay-brothers was left, to become the property of the Church of England and the parish church of Wytham Friary.

They were gone from England—Carthusian monks with all other religious orders, monks and nuns, friars and canons regular. For a brief season they returned when Mary Tudor reigned ; only to be driven away by Elizabeth, daughter of Ann Boleyn.

Sed nondum est finis. Not yet was the end. Persecuted and martyred, banished and expelled the

religious orders return ; blessing their persecutors, forgiving their enemies.

In 1876—the very middle of the reign of queen Victoria—the first stone of a Carthusian monastery was laid at Parkminster in Sussex. In 1882 this charterhouse dedicated to St Hugh of Lincoln was finished, and on May 10, 1883, its church was consecrated by the Catholic bishop of Southwark.

So in the fulness of time the sons of St Bruno returned to follow the life of prayer in England ; and now for fifty years past have they observed the rule St Hugh loved to observe, have served the faith he served on earth.

Thrice from their original home in the mountains of La Grande Chartreuse have the monks been driven.

First came the Huguenots in 1562—ravaging and destroying. All that was valuable they removed and then fired the buildings, so that nothing but the bare walls were left. It passed this whirlwind of fury and destruction. A few years later the monks came back. The charterhouse was rebuilt.

More than two hundred years of peace was granted before the second visitation emptied the mother-house of the Carthusians. In 1792 the Revolution decreed the dissolution of all monasteries and confiscated their possessions. Again the monks departed from La Grande Chartreuse and for twenty-four years were absent. In 1816 the French government sanctioned the return of the Carthusians to their home in the mountains, but refused to allow them to be the owners of the house they had built, the land they cultivated. Certain lands might be

purchased in the valley of the wilderness of Chartreuse, but the Bourbon government would not part with the ownership of the monastery and demanded an annual rent as the condition of residence by the monks. The monastery of La Grande Chartreuse was the property of the state. So the French monarchy decreed.

In 1906 came the last expulsion. The French government—now republican—evicted its tenants. Carthusians, with all other orders of religious, were expelled. For twenty-five years desolation has occupied La Grande Chartreuse, its monks in exile. In other lands the sons of St Bruno build their charterhouses, chanting the divine office night and day, as of old, holding to their rule through all vicissitudes. Not in France, the land of their birth.

Through storm and shine the Carthusians persevere, until the day breaks and all shadows pass.

Hugh of Lincoln was 'my Carthusian Hugh' to king Henry of Anjou. No less is he 'our Carthusian Hugh,' beloved of God and man; friend of lepers and outcast folk; courageous, wise and learned; cherishing tenderly all infants and the birds of the air; serving faithfully the living and caring graciously for the dead. 'Our Carthusian Hugh' while England stands. Ever helping us with his prayers when we call upon him, interceding for our needs. His name liveth for evermore. So we pray

Sancte Hugo Lincolniensis ora pro nobis.

NOTES

- ¹ Bede Jarrett : *History of Europe*, p. 183.
- ² Carlyle in *Past and Present* rediscovered abbot Sampson for nineteenth-century readers.
- ³ Thurston : *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 485.
- ⁴ St Bruno left no rule. The Carthusian observance is framed in the 'customs' of Guigo I, fifth prior of the Grande Chartreuse (1110-1136).
- ⁵ *Giraldus Cambrensis*, Vol. II, 1.
- ⁶ Sapientia ergo mea, et philosophia mea sit philosophia fratris Gerardi, qui nihil habebat in corde nisi Jesum Christum. *Annales Ord. Cartus.* III, p. 58.
- ⁷ Thompson : *Carthusian Order in England*, p. 56.
- ⁸ Bruton Cartulary, No. 381.
- ⁹ Thurston : *op. cit.*, p. 330.
- ¹⁰ *Letters of Peter of Blois*, edited by J. A. Giles, No. 86.
- ¹¹ A copy of the profession of obedience sealed by St Hugh at his consecration is in the cathedral library at Lincoln.
- ¹² Gilbert of Sempringham, a Lincolnshire man, was still alive when St Hugh came to Lincoln. His order of canons and nuns was the only English order, and it lasted without reproach until the Dissolution. St Gilbert died in 1189—he was then over a hundred years old—and was canonized in 1205 by Pope Innocent III.
- ¹³ *Ralph de Coggeshall*, Rolls Series, p. 111.
- ¹⁴ Stubbs : *Constitutional History*, Vol. I, p. 284.
- ¹⁵ 'The relief was paid by the heir before he could obtain his father's land.' Stubbs, *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Thompson : *Carthusian Order in England*, p. 75.
- ¹⁷ The Buckingham story is not in the *Magna Vita*. It is told by William of Newburgh. Vol. II, p. 425.
- ¹⁸ This successful resistance to the royal demand is 'a landmark of constitutional history : for the second time a constitutional opposition to a royal demand for money is made, and made successfully.' Stubbs : *Constitutional History*, Vol. I, p. 548. It is 'the first clear case of the refusal of a money grant demanded directly by the crown and a most valuable precedent for future times.' Stubbs : Preface to *Hoveden*, Vol. IV, p. 91

(Rolls Series). Freeman in *The Norman Conquest* (Vol. V, p. 695) is enthusiastic: 'One of the great principles of English parliamentary right was established by the holy man who, in his own words, had been brought from the simple life of a hermit to exercise the rule of a bishop, and who had made it his duty in his new post to make himself master of all the laws and customs by which in his new office he would be bound.'

¹⁹ It is difficult to understand the basis of this claim of sanctuary made by St Hugh. No legal decision on the subject can be quoted. St Anselm certainly gave sanctuary to a hare that fled to him from pursuers and there are other stories of personal protection of animals.

'The fact seems to be, that there was a deep but rather ill-defined sentiment in the heart of the people, that the peace of God surrounded, as a sort of atmosphere or halo, the persons of those specially consecrated to His service.' Thurston: *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 422.

²⁰ J. H. Newman: Preface to *Historical Sketches*, Vol. I, p. xii.

²¹ See Thurston: *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 480, for particulars of this medieval sickness known as the sacred fire. It seems to have been 'a gangrenous affection scientifically known as ergotism and resulting from the use of rye bread in bad and wet seasons when the grain is in a diseased condition.' When the mortified limbs dropped off and the wounds healed the patient recovered.

²² The Canterbury chapter withstood all attempts of the archbishop to build another church, lest their rights should be invaded. Archbishop Hubert's final proposal, which the chapter accepted, was a church in Lambeth served by Prémonstratensian canons, not less than thirteen nor more than twenty in number.

²³ The incident of the healing of the knight of Lindsay's cancerous arm is not mentioned in the *Magna Vita*. Giraldus Cambrensis speaks of it; Vol. VII, pp. 117, 118; and it is recounted in the *Vita Metrica*—1188–1230.

²⁴ Gairdner: *Calendar of State Papers*, 1540, p. 382.

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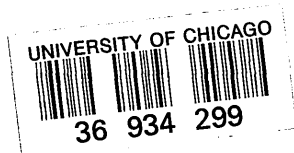
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